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ABSTRACT

The histories of two national libraries, the British Museum Library and the Library of Congress, are examined with respect to the development of each of three functions: (1) the acquisition and maintenance of a comprehensive collection of the country's publications, usually by copyright deposit: (2) the maintenance of basic research collections in the major fields of inquiry: and (3) the provision of leadership and assistance to the rest of the country's libraries in bibliographic activities. It is suggested that, despite dissimilar origins and varying rates of development, the two libraries came eventually to perform the same functions, and thus that the development of national libraries is guided less by convention or tradition than by the needs of the societies in which they arise. (Author/JD)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LIBRARY FUNCTIONS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The three basic functions of a country's national library are the acquisition and maintenance of a comprehensive collection of the country's publications, usually by copyright deposit; the maintenance of basic research collections in the major fields of inquiry; and the provision of leadership and assistance to the rest of the country's libraries in bibliographic activities. The histories of two national libraries, the British Museum Library and the Library of Congress, were examined with respect to the development of each of these three functions. It was found that the two libraries, despite dissimilar origins and varying rates of development, came eventually to perform the same major functions, suggesting that the development of national libraries is guided less by convention or tradition than by the needs of the societies in which they arise.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The existing national libraries of the world vary greatly in size, sophistication of development, and the nature and extent of their services. However, extensive discussion of national library service by individual authors and by participants in symposia reflects what seems to be general agreement as to three basic functions of these institutions.

First, and most notably, the national library of a country is responsible for the acquisition and maintenance of a comprehensive collection of the country's publications. F. C. Francis of the British Museum, in his paper at the Vienna Symposium on National Libraries in Europe, essentially defined the national library in terms of this function;[1] its importance is further attested to by the fact that, of the contributors who addressed themselves to the national library's purpose in the survey reported in Library Trends, July 1955, nearly every one began with a statement of the depository function.[1] So far as possible, the national library is often expected to supplement the collection of national publications with such foreign publications as deal with the country. In the Library Trends survey, this responsibility is mentioned with regard to the national libraries of Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and Israel; Josef Stummvoll of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek proposes the closely related responsibility of "the issuance of a national bibliography which contains all the literature written either about a country or by the nationals of that country."[2]

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[1] F[rank] C[halton] Francis, "The Organization of National Libraries," in Symposium on National Libraries in Europe (Vienna, 8-27 September 1958), National Libraries: Their Problems and Prospects, Unesco Manuals for Libraries, no. 11 (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1960), p. 21.

The acquisition of foreign materials dealing with a country is accomplished, depending on what international agreements exist, by exchange or by outright purchase. The national publications are usually acquired by the national library through copyright deposit; this means that the establishment of such a library depends on effective enforcement of the copyright laws, a point which will be seen to have importance in the history of both the British Museum Library and the Library of Congress.

A second function, related to the above, is the provision of basic research collections in the major fields of inquiry. Like that of the national depository, this function has long been recognized. In testimony before the Select Committee on the British Museum in 1836, Antonio Panizzi stated that the "most important and most noble purpose" of that institution was "as an establishment for the furtherance of education for study and research";[1] Ainsworth Rand Spofford, in his 1899 essay "The Function of a National Library," describes at length the varied demands made on such a library (with particular reference to the Library of Congress) and stresses that "to respond adequately to all these and countless more demands upon its intellectual resources, a National Library must clearly be one of universal range."[2]

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[1] David C. Mearns, issue ed., "Current Trends in National Libraries," Library Trends 4, no. 1 (July 1955; entire issue): 7, 8, 10, 11, 13-17. See also "Meeting of Experts on the National Planning of Library Services in Latin America: Report. Quito, 7-14 February 1966," Unesco Bulletin for Libraries 20, no. 61 (Nov.-Dec. 1966):278-295.

[2] Mearns, "Current Trends," pp. 8, 10, 13-15, 17. See also the conclusion reached by the Vienna symposium (p. 111): "It is the responsibility of the national library to acquire and conserve the whole of the national production of printed material; . . . It should also collect printed material concerning its country, no matter where this is published."

In later years, however, there has been some controversy in regard to this function, principally because the rapid extension of knowledge and the consequent proliferation of publications (especially in the sciences, but increasingly in the social sciences and even the humanities) have called into question the practicality of maintaining an encyclopedic collection in one institution. Francis' paper at the Vienna symposium, referred to above, deals with this question at some length and also raises the point that many users now have "neither the will nor the interest to devote time to search among the large collections of a comprehensive library, but [demand] easier and more direct access to the material required. . . ." In response to these developments, there have been suggestions that small, specialized libraries should take over all but archival functions. Francis readily acknowledges the importance of such special libraries, but defends the concept of a comprehensive research collection in the national library. His principal reason for this view is that the national library, unlike the special library, has no inherent limitations on the scope of its activities and may be the only library in a country that can afford to provide potentially important but little-used materials. As solutions to the problems raised above Francis suggests partial decentralization of staff and collections (to "present the user with a well-defined body of material and provide him with expert assistance") and the development of a system of national cooperation.[1]

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[1] Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum. Report from the Select Committee on British Museum; Together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index (H.M.S.O., 1836), par. 4936. References to this and other British documents will variously contain paragraph or page numbers, or both, as found in the documents themselves.

[2] In Herbert Small, ed., Handbook of the New Library of Congress (Boston: Curtis & Cameron, 1899), p. 125.

In his paper "The Functions and Planning of a National Library," presented at the Library Association's University and Research Section conference in 1963, Ib Magnussen of the Danish Statsbiblioteket deals with the same problems and notes that "there seems to be a general tendency all over the world to develop national libraries from all-embracing universal libraries to special libraries outside the scope of national literature." Magnussen appears to advocate a rather more extensive program of decentralization than does Francis, but warns that renunciation of too many subject areas will isolate the national library and interfere with "borderland"

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[1] Francis, pp. 23-26.

and interdisciplinary research.[1] Magnussen's paper, it should be noted, met with disagreement on this point by R. A. Wilson of the British Museum's Department of Printed Books, who argues that "The case for a universal library is as strong as it ever was: the creation of separate national libraries distinguished by subject would lead to a great deal of uneconomic overlapping and would still leave many users dissatisfied because they needed to cross the frontiers between one subject and another." However, Wilson also recognizes what he calls "the elephantiasis that afflicts all-embracing national libraries" and favors the creation of specialized divisions within the national library.[2]

The extent to which this function is taken on by particular national libraries varies, partly according to the wealth of individual countries and the resources allocated to their national libraries. As noted above, it has long been of importance in the British Museum Library and the Library of Congress. Not all the librarians contributing to the Library Trends study mention the provision of general research collections among their purposes; most of those who do not are the national librarians of the smaller European countries. This function seems well accepted among the larger national libraries of the world and, interestingly, among the national libraries of developing countries (probably, in the latter case, because other library resources which might serve the same purpose are limited; possibly also because of the influence of IFLA and UNESCO, which channel both ideas and resources into developing library systems.[1] This conclusion is further validated by the recommendations of the National and Universities Section of IFLA (meeting in Helsinki, 1965) that the coverage of foreign literature be included among the fundamental functions of a national library.[2]

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[1] In Library Association, University and Research Section, National Libraries (London: The Library Association, 1963), pp. 13-15.

[2] [Discussion], ibid., p. 39.

Finally, the national library provides leadership and assistance to the rest of the country's libraries in bibliographic activities. A great deal has been written about this function, which has undergone more extensive changes than either of the others.

As the name implies, the earliest and most basic bibliographic activity is the compilation of lists of books. This activity dates back to antiquity and was extensively carried out in Europe beginning with the fifteenth-century *Messkataloge*;[3] its earliest appearance in national libraries seems to have been in the enumeration of individual collections and in lists of acquisitions.[4] The national library's present responsibility in this regard is not a matter of controversy; the Vienna symposium concludes that "the most important tasks devolving on a national library in the field of bibliography include compiling and publishing bibliographies,"[1] and again nearly all the national libraries reporting at significant length in the 1955 Library Trends survey stress the importance of this function.[2]

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[1] Mearns, "Current Trends," pp. 6-23.

[2] K[enneth] W[illiam] Humphreys, "National Library Functions," *Unesco Bulletin for Libraries* 20, no. 4 (July-August 1966):161-162. Humphreys' article is an expansion of his paper which was read to and approved by the Section; see International Federation of Library Associations, *Actes du conseil général / Proceedings of the General Council, 31^{e} session, Helsinki, 1965, August 15-21 août* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 97-98.

[3] Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen, *Bibliography: Practical, Enumerative, Historical* (New York: Scribner, 1928), pp. 211-215; LeRoy Harold Linder, *The Rise of Current Complete National Bibliography* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1959), p. 54.

[4] E.g. the early catalogs of the British Museum Library. Arundell Esdaile, *The British Museum Library: A Short History and Survey* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1946), pp. 41-51.

The bibliographies produced by the national library can be regarded as of two broad types, related to the two national library functions previously described. The library's status as a copyright depository obviously makes it a potential center for the creation of national bibliographies and of a union catalog;[3] its strengths in various areas of study and its ability to retain specialists on its staff also make it possible for the national library to produce more specialized bibliographies, but the activity is as likely to be carried on by special libraries or institutes.[4]

The national library, in comparatively recent times, has also come to be regarded as a central cataloging resource for its country's libraries; activities in this regard include the creation of standard cataloging procedures, the distribution of cataloging data, and the provision of information to the profession on bibliographic practices. This centralization of cataloging functions was recommended in the conclusion of the Unesco symposium in Vienna[5] and was incorporated into the IFLA National and University Libraries Section's fundamental recommendations at Helsinki;[1] and some form of centralized cataloging exists in most industrialized countries, although the agency responsible is not always the national library. Of the twenty-one countries surveyed by R. S. Giljarevskij in 1965-66, at least ten (U.S.S.R., U.S.A., U.K., Austria, Denmark, Sweden, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand) had cataloging distribution carried out either by the national library or affiliated agency (such as the British National Bibliography) or by some other agency using information provided by the national bibliography.[2]

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[1] Mirko Rupel, "Bibliographic Activities of National Libraries," National Libraries: Their Problems and Prospects, p. 50.

[2] Ibid., pp. 6-12, 15-17.

[3] Magnussen, p. 18.

[4] Vienna Symposium, p. 72.

[5] Ibid., pp. 78, 113.

It will be noted that Giljarevskij's survey dealt with the distribution only of cataloging data, and not of information on bibliographic practices. However, this latter activity remains of some importance. The participants in the Vienna symposium concluded that "it was for the national library, in co-operation with other libraries in the country, to promote the adoption throughout the national territory of common rules for the compilation of catalogues";[3] one of the outstanding examples of this national standardization has been the preparation and ongoing revision of the Anglo-American

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[1] Humphreys, pp. 163-164.

[2] R[udžero] S[ergeevič] Giljarevskij, International Distribution of Catalog Cards: Present Situation and Future Prospects (Paris: Unesco, 1969, c1968), pp. 9-22. Giljarevskij discusses results for only nineteen countries in detail, Hungary and India being omitted.

[3] Vienna Symposium, p. 78.

Cataloging Rules.[1] A variation of this, advocated by Magnussen[2] and by IFLA's National and University Libraries Section particularly for developing countries,[3] is the training of librarians by the national library.

It has been mentioned that the bibliographic function of the national library has undergone fairly extensive changes and continues to do so. Two of the more important expansions of this function being discussed at present are the automation of cataloging and bibliographic information and the development of international cooperation. Again, the Library of Congress provides an example of both the potential capacities and the practical problems of bibliographic automation in the development of the MARC program.[4] International cooperation in bibliographic activities, which is facilitated by automation and depends on the development of uniform national standards, is being advanced by the activities of several organizations, most notably UNESCO, IFLA, and the Fédération Internationale de Documentation (FID). Among the achievements of these organizations to date are the numerous library manuals prepared by UNESCO, often in cooperation with other groups; the FID's development of the Universal Decimal Classification and its studies of information-processing techniques; and IFLA's International Standard Bibliographic Descriptions.[1]

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[1] American Library Association et al., Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, North American text with supplement (Chicago: American Library Association, c1969, 1970), pp. v-vii. Commonly referred to, and hereafter cited, as AACR.

[2] Magnussen, pp. 18-19. [3] Humphreys, pp. 167-168.

[4] Charles A. Goodrum, The Library of Congress, Praeger Library of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1974), pp. 228-233.

Neither the British Museum Library nor the Library of Congress began existence as a national library of the sort described above. The British Museum Library was originally a research library based on private collections, the Library of Congress a legislative reference library of still narrower scope; neither attempted a comprehensive collection of national publications, and neither pursued more than a necessary minimum of bibliographic activity. After their founding, however, they were influenced by important changes which had begun to take place in the nature of scholarship and the needs of library users, in the English-speaking world as elsewhere. The following chapters will examine where the two libraries began, and how they changed over the years, in relation to each of these three basic functions.

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[1] F. A. Sviridov, "International Trends in Documentation and Information Services," in H. C. Campbell, issue ed., "Developments in National Document and Information Services," Library Trends 17, no. 3 (January 1969):326-338; International Federation of Library Associations, ISBD(M), International Standard Bibliographic Description of Monographic Publications, 1st standard ed. (London: IFLA Committee on Cataloging, 1974).

CHAPTER II

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT: BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

As stated above, the depository function of a national library is dependent on the establishment and enforcement of effective copyright laws; it is also dependent on the integration of the national library into the copyright system by means of a provision for mandatory deposit with the library. There is, of course, no inevitable connection between copyright and deposit legislation,[1] and in fact the earliest copyrights were merely guarantees (usually to a printer, sometimes to an author) of the privilege of exclusive publication of a work within a given locality for a specified time. Thus, in the first known copyright action, John of Spina was guaranteed by the Senate of Venice in 1469 the exclusive right to print the epistles of Cicero and Pliny for five years; in 1491 the same city extended copyright privileges to an author for what appears to have been the first time, allowing Peter of Ravenna and the publisher of his choice the exclusive right to print and sell his Phoenix. During the early sixteenth century such practices had become established in Italy and in other European countries, including England.

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[1] Frederick G. Kenyon, preface to R. C. Barrington Partridge, The History of the Legal Deposit of Books Throughout the British Empire (London: The Library Association, 1938), p. v.

The systematization of copyright into a routine and nationally administered procedure (as opposed to a privilege granted in response to a special request) and the establishment of deposit provisions arose in the service neither of scholarship nor of the protection of authors' rights, but of censorship. The development of printing in Europe was part of a general upheaval in politics and ideas, of which the Reformation was perhaps the most notable movement. The governments of Europe soon determined that, by requiring the licensing of all publications and making the deposit of a copy of a work part of the application for such license, it was possible to gain some measure of control over the ideas disseminated among the people in print. In England the agency for this control was the Company of Stationers, originally chartered by Philip and Mary in 1556 to advance "the declared object of the Crown . . . to prevent the propagation of the reformed religion."[1]

For nearly ninety years following this charter the control of printing continued to be exercised primarily by the Crown, through the agency of the Stationers' Company and the Court of Star Chamber. During this period the Star Chamber issued several decrees defining limitations on printing activity, extending these limitations to importation as well as domestic printing, and establishing a universal licensing requirement; the last of these decrees, in 1637, is considered one of the most important, since it contained clauses relating to literary property that remained influential long after the decree itself had ceased to have effect.[1]

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[1] Brander Matthews, "The Evolution of Copyright," in George Haven Putnam, comp., The Question of Copyright (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), pp. 324-350.

In 1640 the Star Chamber was abolished and control of copyright matters passed to Parliament. At first this represented no great departure, in intent or administration, from the Star Chamber's policies. However, the Licensing Act passed in 1662 (13 and 14 Car. II, c. 33; also known as the Regulation of Printing Act) modified the law of deposit in a manner that was to be of significance in later years, specifying that three copies of any published work were to be deposited with the Company of Stationers, of which one was to be turned over to the Keeper of the Royal Library and the other two to the Vice-Chancellors of the universities at Oxford and Cambridge.[2]

The Licensing Act was twice renewed, lapsed from 1679 until another renewal in 1685, and expired for the last time in 1694. For some years thereafter there was no legislative protection of copyright in England, a situation which the Stationers' Company attempted to rectify in part by regulations that could apply only to its own members. The Company, as well as other booksellers, petitioned Parliament repeatedly for a renewal of copyright protection. These efforts led at last to the passage in 1709 and 1710 of the Copyright Act, 8 Anne, c. 19, which reduced the former indefinite term of copyright to a conditionally renewable term of fourteen years, clearly vested literary property in the author rather than the printer or seller, and increased the number of privileged deposit libraries to nine.[1] These and other provisions gave rise to much controversy, and the passage of time showed the Act to be far from a perfect instrument. Its faults aside, however, it marked the beginning of a new period in copyright regulation and has formed the basis for English legislation in the field up to the present.[2]

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[1] Walter Arthur Copinger, Copinger on the Law of Copyright, 6th ed. by F. E. Skone James (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1927), pp. 5-6; Harry Ransom, The First Copyright Statute (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), pp. 62-65. The quote is from Copinger, p. 5.

There is some disagreement as to the dating of events between Caxton's establishment of the first English press and the passage of the Copyright Statute of 1709-10. Where the earlier writers cited here give the dates of the first Stationers' charters and the abolition of Star Chamber as 1556 and 1640 respectively, Ransom has 1557 and 1641, attributing the confusion to misunderstanding of the dates of contemporary documents. For convenience of reference, and considering the question a minor one, I have used the earlier dates.

[2] Partridge, pp. 23-24.

The significance of these developments to the British Museum lies in the fact that in 1757, the Museum received as a gift from George II the Royal Library, and with it the Library's privilege of deposit. However, this event, which theoretically should have insured the Museum Library of a comprehensive intake of British literary products, had little practical effect for some years. The Museum's inheritance of the Royal Library's privilege was recognized by its administration to the extent that modern British books were seldom bought, on the apparent assumption that they would be received by deposit. Yet the Copyright Act, in its original form, was by no means properly designed for this purpose. No claim at all could be made to Scottish, Irish, or even provincial English publications; and since the theoretical right of deposit applied only to works registered with the Stationers' Company, publishers resorted to the expedient of failing to register those books that the deposit libraries were likely to claim, even though the protection of copyright was forfeited by the omission.[1]

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[1] Ransom, pp. 94-117, 132; Copinger, pp. 8-10; Partridge, pp. 33-36. The additional libraries were those of the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews; the King's and Marischal Colleges at Aberdeen; the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh; and Sion College in London. This meant that three years after the Treaty of Union the Scots owned more than half the kingdom's deposit libraries, a fact which doubtless did no harm to their reputation for shrewd dealing.

[2] Ransom, p. 6.

The century following the passage of the first Copyright Act was marked by much litigation and parliamentary debate, with the publishers arguing the hardship of mandatory deposit (the number of privileged libraries was raised to eleven in 1801) and the deposit libraries, usually represented by the Universities and Sion College, seeking confirmation and extension of their rights to registered material. During this time the decision of the House of Lords in Donaldson vs. Becket (1774) established that publication extinguished the common-law copyright protection of a work, and the University Copyright Act of 1775 (15 George III, c. 53) affirmed, among other clauses, that the deposit of nine complete copies of a work at Stationers' Hall was necessary to obtain copyright protection;[2] but these events had little effect on the receipt of registered books in the deposit libraries. Of more importance in this regard was the suit brought against the printer, Bryer, by Cambridge University in the Court of King's Bench, resulting in 1812 in the decision that eleven copies of each new work and altered edition were to be deposited for the libraries whether registered or not. The furor aroused by this decision led to the creation of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on copyright in 1813, which introduced three bills in turn for the consideration of Parliament. The third, passed as the Copyright Act of 1814 (54 George III, c. 156), required the deposit of eleven copies of a new or amended work complete with illustrative matter, the copy for the British Museum being printed on the best paper. In return, the term of copyright was extended to twenty-eight years, renewable once. The British Museum copy was to be deposited simultaneously with registration for copyright; however, the failure to provide a penalty for non-deposit of this copy defeated the legislators' intention to place the Museum on a more privileged footing than the other deposit libraries, which were to receive their copies on demand only.[1]

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[1] Esdaile, pp. 66-68; Ransom, p. 103. In fact, even this last-named deterrent was rendered ineffective by the 1798 King's Bench decision (Beckford vs. Hook) that copyright attached to unregistered books.

[2] Copinger, p. 10; Partridge, pp. 42-43.

Publishers continued to object to the necessity of reserving eleven copies of each registered work, particularly as the more specialized of the deposit libraries ultimately rejected as unsuitable many of the books received; they were further vexed when the libraries demanded copies of several expensive reprint editions of early English works whose original copyright had long since expired. Agitation for reduction in the number of deposits led eventually to passage in 1836 of a Copyright Act (6 & 7 William IV, c. 110) that replaced the deposit privilege of six libraries with compensatory grants, leaving intact the privilege of the British Museum, the Bodleian, Cambridge, the Faculty of Advocates (Edinburgh) and Trinity College (Dublin).[1]

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[1] Copinger, p. 10; Partridge, pp. 45-62.

During this time the benefits accruing to the British Museum Library from the evolving copyright legislation improved somewhat, but never attained a truly satisfactory level. Initially there appears to have been little interest in the deposit privilege; in fact, Partridge states that up to the early nineteenth century the Trustees of the Museum "had not claimed a single book under the copyright acts," though Esdaile does not believe that this is altogether true.[2]

Perhaps the earliest sign of interest in a systematic enforcement of the Copyright Act's deposit provisions was the Trustees' decision in 1806 to seek a legal opinion from the Master of the Rolls, Sir William Grant, and from Sir William Scott as to whether the Museum had received the right of deposit in 1757 along with the old Royal Library; the opinion returned was that it indubitably had, particularly as that right had never been invoked in the formation of the second Royal Library by George III.[3] This decision, followed by the passage of the Act of 1814, clarified the Museum's depository status, and in 1815 the Principal Librarian, Joseph Planta, was directed "to empower Mr. Baber [Keeper of Printed Books] to demand such books as the Museum may be entitled to receive under the new Copyright Act";[1] in addition, an agent was appointed to receive the Museum's books at Stationers' Hall, his salary being fixed in November of 1815 at twenty guineas a year.[2]

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[1] Partridge, pp. 65-77. [2] Ibid., p. 61; Esdaile, pp. 49, 67.

[3] G. F. Barwick, The Reading Room of the British Museum (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1929), p. 58; Partridge, p. 61; Esdaile, p. 68.

Thereafter the entry of books at Stationers' Hall, and their acquisition by the Museum, increased considerably. In 1814 the number of entries at the Hall was about 500; in 1815 they exceeded a thousand, continuing to rise over the next forty years.[3] The Museum's receipts numbered 578 in 1814, 1,010 in 1815, and 1,275 in 1816, and rose to 5,091 in 1835 and 5,293 in 1841.[4] However, the incomplete provisions of the Acts of 1814 and 1836 meant that the Museum's right could still be evaded in many cases, it being impossible in practical terms for the Keeper of Printed Books and the Museum's agent at Stationers' Hall to monitor the total output of every publisher in the nation in order to claim a copy of every work. Several witnesses before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the British Museum, during its inquiry of 1835-36, mention this deficiency. The Reverend Henry Baber, then Keeper of Printed Books, stated that "we lose, I conjecture, about one-fifth of the publications; there is every dirty trick resorted to to impose upon us, and to evade the Act." Baber continued with a summary of the copyright books and pamphlets acquired in 1835, pointing out that of the total 931 articles had been entered at the Hall, while 2,263 would not have been received without the efforts of the Library's collector.[1] Edward Edwards added an account of his own research, in which "I have taken works published between December 1834 and July 1835, whose author's [sic] names come under the first three letters of the alphabet, and within those limitations, I find 48 such works wanting in the Museum." He also believed that a change in the copyright law was "imperatively called for" to remedy this situation.[2]

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[1] Barwick, p. 58. [2] Partridge, p. 62. [3] Barwick, p. 59.

[4] Partridge, p. 327.

This change came about with the passage in 1842 of the Imperial Copyright Act (5 & 6 Victoria, c. 45). This Act required delivery by the publisher to the British Museum of a complete bound copy of the best edition of every work first published and of every altered edition thereafter, with a penalty for non-delivery of the value of the book plus a five-pound fine and legal costs. The new legislation appears to have had some effect; the number of books received by the Museum rose to 7,188 in 1842 and 8,122 in 1844, and remained in the nine thousands through 1852.[3] Nevertheless, the testimony of several of the witnesses before the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Constitution and Government of the British Museum of 1847-49 indicated that glaring deficiencies remained. Among these was John Payne Collier, an author and literary scholar who had frequented the Library for over forty years and who illustrated the lacunae in English literature by "the fact that of Wordsworth there is not a single edition on the shelves of the Museum" (that is, of the collected works; individual works had been bought); his opinion was that this and numerous other deficiencies arose because copyright matters rested with the Secretary of the Museum, rather than with the Keeper of Printed Books, and because advertisements and booksellers' lists were imperfectly searched.[1]

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[1] Great Britain, Parliament, Select Committee, Report, pars. 4628-4645 (pp. 369-371).

[2] Ibid., pars. 4758-4760 (pp. 383-384). See also testimony of Sir Harris Nicolas, pars. 3618-3620, advancing the same conclusion.

[3] Partridge, p. 327.

Antonio Panizzi, then Keeper of Printed Books, testified at some length on the status of copyright receipts, amplifying some points of previous testimony and correcting others. Josiah Forshall, Secretary of the Museum, had stated that the Copyright Act "is not evaded so much now" as formerly and that the publishers in general "cheerfully comply with the provisions of an Act which is of very dubious policy. . . . the London publishers, I believe, supply this library with forty-nine fiftieths of the books which are published, sooner or later."[2] With this estimate Panizzi strongly disagreed:

> . . . I believe that is a mistake, and a very great mistake. Of the works published in the provinces, I believe we get a certain number, but nothing in comparison to the number which is published; of the works printed out of England, I mean in Scotland and Ireland, I believe we get almost none at all; and of the works published in the colonies, to which the copyright extends, we get none at all.[3]

It was Panizzi's opinion that the law was not stringent enough: "If we are to have a Copyright Act . . . we ought to have a stringent one . . . As things are at present we lose the books because they do not come by copyright, and I do not feel justified in purchasing them." He may have meant that the enforcement of the Act, rather than the Act itself, was at fault, since the greater part of his testimony on this subject dealt with the consequences of the Secretary's responsibility for copyright acquisitions (this function having been transferred from the Keeper of Printed Books a few months before Panizzi's appointment to the office). Panizzi's responsibilities were already heavy, and he admitted that as to his own preference he would like the division of labor to remain as it was; "but if you ask me abstractedly [sic]," he went on, "just as if I was not the Keeper of Printed Books, I should say that decidedly there is no question" that the duties of copyright receipt should be in his own department rather than the Secretary's. "I am perpetually pestered with people who find fault with me because there are not these books, and I have no means of claiming them. The public, not knowing whose fault it is, not unnaturally suppose it is mine."[1] Logic strongly suggested that the task of enforcing copyright deposit should fall, as it had previously, to the department responsible for the collection where the deposited items would be housed; and Panizzi might well have thought, though he did not say it, that an inefficient allocation of duties was only made worse by Forshall's failing health and unenthusiastic attitude toward the Copyright Act.

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[1] Great Britain, Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Constitution and Government of the British Museum, Report and Minutes of Evidence (H.M.S.O., 1850), pars. 5111-5113 (pp. 325-326).

[2] Ibid., pars. 832, 1443-1444 (pp. 31, 58).

[3] Ibid., par. 8996 (p. 599).

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[1] Ibid., pars. 9004, 9012-9013 (pp. 599-600).

In their report the Commissioners endorsed Panizzi's views on the proper administration of copyright acquisitions. They concluded that "in imposing upon the Secretary's Office the charge of the books transmitted under the Copyright Acts, we see a strong instance of unnecessary interference with the duties of the department of printed books. We can ascribe this to nothing but the undue extension of the Secretary's duties and powers . . ."[1]

In accordance with the Committee's recommendations, the Trustees of the Museum made plans to return responsibility for copyright deposit to the Keeper of Printed Books in 1850. Hearing of this, Panizzi sent the Trustees a memorandum urging that "the power of receiving what is brought to the Museum, without that of enforcing the delivery of what ought to be brought . . . will produce no benefit."[2] His advice was heeded, and in May he was given not only authority to supervise collection of deposit items, but power of attorney to prosecute defaulting publishers.

Panizzi began his campaign in October with a circular letter, to be distributed to British publishers, giving notice of the new policy of strict enforcement of the Copyright Act. After a month he reported to the Trustees that several publishers had responded neither to the circular nor to solicitors' warning letters; he was given a somewhat hesitant permission to institute legal proceedings against these firms. The first round of litigation brought into court eight publishers, who--"amazed and indignant"[1]--were convicted and fined. Numerous further summonses followed, nearly all resulting in conviction, and in 1852 Panizzi began to go farther afield. Visiting Scotland in July and traveling to Oxford, Dublin, and Cork in September, he brought action against publishers and arranged for regular notification of new publications; and, as his devoted biographer Fagan remarks, "his presence was in all places which he visited attended with dislike."[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.

[2] Edward Miller, Prince of Librarians: The Life and Times of Antonio Panizzi of the British Museum (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, c1967), p. 202.

In fact, Panizzi's mission was an odious one to him, in all respects save his awareness of its importance. As Fagan phrases it, "bitter were the denunciations hurled against Panizzi's devoted head"[3]--he is referring to a series of suits brought against the enormously successful publisher of popular "Libraries," Henry George Bohn,[4] but the description would apply to much that was said about Panizzi during this period from the witness stand, in correspondence, and in the public press. Upon his return from tours of Wales Panizzi "would receive letters from irate Welsh publishers, provokingly written in their own native tongue"; an uglier spirit was shown by those who referred to Panizzi by such epithets as "this d-----d Italian" in their letters to the Times.[5]

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[1] Louis Fagan, The Life and Correspondence of Sir Anthony Panizzi, 2d ed., 2 vols. (London: Remington, 1880), 1:289.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

[4] Dictionary of National Biography, 5:304-306.

[5] Partridge, p. 84.

Panizzi occasionally defended his campaign in the press, his letter in the Times of February 2, 1853, being typical of his public position. In it he explained how the Copyright Act had been evaded, described the procedure used by the Museum in dealing with defaulting publishers (with special reference to the courtesy of the warning circular) and repeated his belief that "I have no right to spend public money in encouraging non-compliance with the law. . . . If the books are not in the Library, I am found fault with, and I am found fault with if I use the only means I now have of procuring them." He concluded by citing the increased deposit figures for 1852 over those of 1851 as evidence of the effectiveness of his methods.[1]

In private correspondence, he expressed more freely the stress and discouragement that his task had brought him. As early as 1852 he had to be persuaded to retain the power of attorney he had campaigned so hard to receive, and on the third of February, 1853, he wrote to his close friend Francis Haywood that while Sir Henry Ellis had been granted an extra £200 per annum for his duties as Secretary, "To me nothing has been given and I will not go on."[2] On the 24th of the month he went so far as to write to Sir Henry, asking him to "represent to [the Trustees] his strong wish of being excused from a duty which . . . was expressly assigned to the Secretary." The Trustees, horrified, once more persuaded him to go on with his efforts.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 84-86. [2] Fagan, 1:291-292. [3] Miller, pp. 205-206.

Panizzi always had his supporters, however. Among them were the editors of the Times, to whom it so often fell to report on the continuing controversy; their articles maintained that his actions were justified, though they sometimes rebuked him as well as his opponents when the barrage of words from both sides became immoderate. The Trustees, too, though at first hesitant to endorse Panizzi's proposals, maintained their support once it was given and commended him for his efforts on the Museum's behalf. And in time, as the policy of strict enforcement became well established, opposition to it waned considerably. In retrospect, the charges of harsh and vindictive treatment which were lodged against Panizzi do not seem well-founded. His temper often ran high and his criticism of those who attempted to evade the Copyright Act was blunt; but his actions against publishers, though energetic, were in fact fairly clement. First of all, there was the warning given by the Museum's circular and by solicitors' letters thereafter; and when legal proceedings actually began, Panizzi generally preferred to prosecute for inexpensive works so as not to make the resulting fine excessive. And, of course, the fundamental argument repeated by Panizzi and his supporters was that he was after all only enforcing an act which had been part of British law for many years, to the benefit of which the public was entitled.

The success of Panizzi's campaign is amply attested to by the figures for receipt of copyright books during the eighteen-fifties. The works received in 1849 numbered 9,566; in 1850 and 1851 they were 9,834 and 9,871; in 1852 the number jumped to 13,934 and continued to rise, reaching 38,807 in 1859. In fact, consistent compliance with the deposit provisions of the British copyright law has remained the rule from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, so that, as Partridge states, the year 1850 can be regarded as the turning point in the history of copyright deposit in the British Museum.[1]

The British copyright laws have undergone changes since, but these have not materially affected deposit in the British Museum. The Act of 1911 (1 and 2 George 5, c. 46) abolished common-law copyright in unpublished materials and substituted statutory copyright from the time of a work's creation, thus making deposit a condition not of copyright but of publication; however, the financial sanctions remained. Due to a faulty definition of the term "book" in this Act, the Museum was for some time troubled by an influx of labels and advertising flyers from a patent-medicine firm, but an emergency bill enacted in 1915 (5 and 6 George 5, c. 38) exempted such literature from deposit while preserving its copyrighted status.[2] More recently, the British Museum Library has undergone considerable administrative restructuring; the National Reference Library for Science and Invention, administered as part of the BML, has been assigned the receipt by deposit of scientific and technological literature, and following the recommendations of the Dainton Report of 1969, the entire library has been removed from the British Museum and given independent status as the British Library. However (as was remarked in the Dainton Report) the deposit system, as championed by Panizzi and codified in the Act of 1911, has now been generally accepted as an effective method of building a national archive of British publications, and it has been allowed to remain essentially unchanged.[1]

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[1] Partridge, p. 111. [2] Ibid., p. 115.

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[1] Great Britain, National Libraries Committee, Report of the National Libraries Committee (London: H.M.S.O., 1969), pars. 336-337 (p. 90). This report is commonly known as the Dainton Report (after the Committee's chairman, Sir Frederick S. Dainton) and will be so cited hereafter.

CHAPTER III

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The first copyright laws of the United States were, as would be expected, modeled on the English Act of 1710; they were originally enactments of the original States (except for Vermont), passed from 1783 to 1786. In 1787 the Constitution was adopted, with a provision authorizing Congress to secure "for limited times, to authors and inventors, the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries," and in 1790 a Federal statute was passed which superseded the states' copyright laws.

This statute provided a copyright term of fourteen years, renewable once if the author were still living. Requirements included deposit of the title before publication in the clerk's office of the local U.S. District Court; printing of four notices in a newspaper within two months after publication; and deposit of a copy with the Secretary of State within three months after publication. The penalty for non-compliance was forfeiture plus a fine of fifty cents per sheet.

The original act underwent several modifications during the first third of the nineteenth century, including an extension of the first term to twenty-eight years, the elimination of newspaper notice except for renewals, and the requirement that the deposit copy be given to the disctrict clerk for transmittal to the Secretary of State.[1] But during this early period there was no provision for deposit in a library; in fact, of the two libraries in which deposit was eventually made, one (the Smithsonian Institution) was not established until 1846, and the other--the Library of Congress, destined to become the de facto national library of the United States--had been founded on principles and for purposes having little to do with the collection of a national literary archive. What those purposes were will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter; briefly stated, the Library of Congress was established as a strictly functional reference library for legislators and other officials, and, even after the scope of its collection was somewhat expanded, its services were for many years regarded as being national only in so far as they aided the process of government.

Some attention was paid during the library's first few decades to the idea of instituting a system of deposit, either by copyright or by less formal methods. As early as 1815 George Watterston, then Librarian, inserted a notice in the National Intelligencer to the effect that, considering the evident intent of Congress "to make [the Library of Congress] the great national repository of literature and science, and in some instances of the arts also, it is desirable that American authors, engravers, and painters who are solicitous to preserve their respective production as mementoes of the times, would transmit to the Library a copy of such work as they may design for the public eye."[1] This and similar suggestions were ignored, however, until Stephen A. Douglas' introduction on April 29, 1846, of an amendment to the bill then under consideration for the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution, providing that the Library of Congress, in addition to the State Department and the proposed Institution, receive a copy of every work registered for copyright in the United States. The act was passed as amended on August 10, 1846. However, as David Mearns puts it, the law lacked "a good denture." The absence of provisions for enforcement in the law of 1790, which along with the sprawling and circuitous system of local deposits resulted in an accumulation of only ten thousand volumes during the seventy-five years the Department of State supervised copyright, was not corrected by that of 1846. As in the past, some publishers sent copies and others did not; and while a fair amount of ephemera came to the two deposit libraries, many works of more substance never saw the shelves of either. After thirteen years the law, generally acknowledged to have been a failure, was repealed.[2]

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[1] Richard Rogers Bowker, Copyright: Its History and Its Law (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), pp. 35-36.

The Library's collection during the years following the repeal of this Act, as in the years previous, suffered badly from neglect. The Librarian's annual report of 1861 mentions that no encyclopedia later than the Britannica of 1842 was to be found, nor was there a complete file of any American newspaper except the National Intelligencer.[1] However, this situation was soon to be radically changed, largely owing to the efforts of the man who is believed to have written the 1861 Report of the Librarian of Congress.

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[1] Lucy Salamanca, Fortress of Freedom: The Story of the Library of Congress (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1942), pp. 130-131.

[2] David C. Mearns, The Story Up to Now: The Library of Congress, 1800-1946 (Washington: [The Library], 1947), pp. 56-57.

The Librarian of Congress from 1861 through 1864 was John G. Stephenson, who had been a physician in Indiana and had interested himself in Republican politics, coming to Washington with the new administration in hopes of finding a job. Once appointed he seems to have found the duties of the battlefield more compelling than those of the Library, serving from time to time as a battlefield surgeon in the First Army Corps. In fact, his most significant act as Librarian was one of his first: the appointment as Assistant Librarian of Ainsworth Rand Spofford, who ran the Library with a free hand during the Librarian's frequent and often extended absences.[2] On December 22, 1864, John Stephenson resigned from his post, and having gained the support of the Library Committee's chairman and of several other Congressmen, Spofford was appointed Librarian on December 31.[3]

The new Librarian of Congress began his duties with, perhaps, a clearer and more ambitious conception of the institution in his charge than any of his predecessors had had. It was his assumption from the start that the Library of Congress was or ought to be the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[2] Ibid., pp. 70-71; John Y. Cole, ed., Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Bookman and Librarian (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1975), p. 26.

[3] Cole, p. 31.

American national library, construing the role rather narrowly as "a permanent, comprehensive collection of national literature";[1] and he realized the necessity for attaining this standard of restoring and perfecting the system of copyright deposit. During February of 1865 Spofford enlisted the support of the Library Committee for an amendment to the existing copyright legislation reinstating a deposit requirement for the Library of Congress; this act was passed on March 3. It was a notable improvement on the act of 1846 in that it incorporated the penalty of forfeiture of copyright in default of delivery, though to invoke the penalty it was necessary for the Librarian to note the non-delivery of an item and demand it from the proprietor in writing.[2] The new legislation had its effect, bringing in 836 volumes of books and 1,435 articles altogether, including maps, engravings, photographs, and music (Spofford's figure; my addition gives 1,424, or 1,996 if pamphlets and periodicals are included) during 1866, but Spofford was unsatisfied. The increase in deposits, he wrote in his annual report for that year, "is an increase of only 290 volumes over the receipts of the first nine months of the operation of the law. . . . Comparatively few owners of copyrights, outside of the leading publishing houses, comply with the requisition of the law without notice."[3]

In suggesting a remedy for this deficient intake of deposits, Spofford pointed to the example of the British Museum Library, whose procedures in this regard were well established by this time:

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[1] Ibid., p. 32 (Cole's phrase).

[2] Ibid., p. 34; Mearns, pp. 87-91.

[3] United States, Library of Congress, Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1866, p. 5.

> The provisions of the English law of copyright, which are much more exacting than our own . . . prescribe a penalty of five pounds sterling, and the value of the books withheld. . . . This provision is found to be amply sufficient to secure a general compliance with the law. A similar modification of the present statute is respectfully submitted to the consideration of the committee, as also a provision by which books and other publications may be transmitted through the mails, free of charge, to the Library of Congress. These amendments would remove the chief obstacles which exist to a full compliance with the law.[1]

The Library Committee was not slow in responding to Spofford's suggestions; by February 18, 1867, an act had been passed requiring deposit of every copyrighted "book, pamphlet, map, chart, musical composition, print, engraving, or photograph" in the Library of Congress, with provision for free mail delivery of such articles. The penalty for failure to deposit was twenty-five dollars--the equivalent, at that time, of the fine in force in Britain.[2]

The effect of these changes can be seen in the figures for deposit receipts from 1866 to 1869. As already mentioned, 836 volumes of books and 1,996 articles altogether were received by deposit in 1866; by December 1, 1867 (the new amendments to the copyright law having been in effect a little less than a year) these figures had increased to 1,493 and 4,499 respectively; they rose to 1,682 and 5,091 in 1868 and to 1,831 and 6,680 in 1869. It is evident that, as in Britain, the provision of sanctions greatly aided the acquisition of deposit items, and it is worth noting that in 1868 Spofford was able to report that "No instance of a necessity for the enforcement of the penalty against delinquent publishers has yet occurred."[1]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, p. 91.

The operation of the law from the Library's standpoint remained imperfect, however. In his 1868 annual report Spofford observes:

> . . . the statute referred to is so far from being a self-acting one, that multitudes of publications in all parts of the country are never furnished to the library until after the official demand provided for in the law has been made. This requires incessant vigilance, not only to obtain authentic evidence of all copyrights issued in the numerous judicial districts of the United States, but to transmit the requisite notice to all delinquent proprietors of copyrights, and to record the results. With the utmost diligence it is found impracticable to secure for the library all copyright publications that are issued.[2]

The source of the Library's difficulties lay in the fact that the actual registration for copyright still took place in the various district courts. In a country as vast as the United States had already become, with half-settled regions within its borders whose district clerks might have very little concern for maintaining any sort of communication with Washington, such an arrangement could not provide the centralization necessary for Spofford's plans. The Librarian did not directly address this problem in his reports, and Mearns does not venture to say what part he had in its solution; however, Cole suggests that the plan for the legislation which consolidated registration and deposit was Spofford's.

This legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives on April 14, 1870, by Thomas A. Janckes of the Committee on Patents, as part of an act concerning patent procedures which had been reported a week earlier. In a speech delivered during the last seven minutes of the morning session, Jenckes summarized some of the disadvantages of the existing law--including the fact that it placed "in the store-rooms of the Department of the Interior from thirty to forty thousand volumes, beyond the reach of consultation"--and proposed amendments by which "the title-pages of books which are to be copyrighted shall be sent at once to the Library of Congress, and when published that [two] copies of each publication shall also be sent to the Library of Congress." This legislation, like that of 1867, was recommended with reference to the British practice: "the consequence of the English deposit requirements is that the British Museum contains a complete library of all the copyright publications since the passage of the law." The bill was subjected to a few alterations in the subsequent discussion, the most important being an increase in the Librarian's salary to $4,000, and was passed on July 8, 1870.[1]

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[1] Library of Congress, Report, 1867, p. 2; 1868, pp. 3-4; 1869, p. 1.

[2] Library of Congress, Report, 1868, p. 4.

The events of subsequent years justified Spofford's assertion in his report for 1870 that

> . . . the expediency of this change [the centralization of copyright procedures in the Library of Congress] is already demonstrated in the larger acquisitions from this source during the five months' operation of the law, while the possession for the first time, of authentic evidence of all publications issued, which are the subject of copyright, secures an almost complete compliance with the law requiring the deposit of copies in the Library.

Copyright receipts for that year had numbered 2,734 books and 11,512 articles of all sorts; the numbers continued to increase, attaining 6,294 and 23,946 in 1873, 8,020 and 26,200 in 1876 and 9,350 and 30,026 by 1879.[1] In fact, the system of deposit proved such a success that by 1871 Spofford was suggesting the possibility of a separate building for the Library, a suggestion which in 1872 became an urgent and detailed recommendation.[2] The remaining quarter-century of his career as Librarian was very largely taken up with the administration of copyright matters and the campaign for new quarters, the building of which was not approved until 1896 and which were not completed until 1897, the year in which Spofford gave up his post and became Chief Assistant Librarian under John Russell Young.[3]

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[1] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 92-96; Cole, p. 35.

The law of copyright has undergone some changes since the act of 1870. An act of March 3, 1891, reduced the allowable time for deposit from ten days to the day of publication.[4] A comprehensive new code passed in 1909 simplified formalities for establishing copyright, extended the term of protection, added a requirement that books be printed and bound in the United States, and made new provisions for performance rights and unpublished works.[5] Most recently, Public Law 94-553, which went into effect on the first day of 1978, brings the term of copyright into conformity with European practice (the life of the creator plus 50 years), transfers proprietary rights from publishers to authors, and codifies the concept of fair use.[1] However, none of this legislation has materially altered the deposit provisions. The legislative and administrative mechanism which has helped make the Library of Congress almost certainly the largest library in the world, with a collection of over 64 million pieces in 1973,[2] is essentially that which A. R. Spofford and the Congress created in 1870.

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[1] Library of Congress, Report, 1870, pp. 3-4; 1873, p. 3; 1876, p. 4; 1879, p. 4.

[2] Ibid., 1871, pp. 4-6; 1872, pp. 6-11.

[3] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 114-115, 118-125; Cole, pp. 35-37. Also see Spofford's annual reports for 1871-1885, which describe each year the increasingly crowded condition of the Library and the ever more urgent need for a new building, and those for 1886-1896, which report briefly on the progress of construction--usually, and understandably, described as "gratifying."

[4] Library of Congress, Report, 1903, p. 459.

[5] Bowker, pp. 39, 125-152.

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[1] Edward G. Holley, "A Librarian Looks at the New Copyright Law," American Libraries 8, no. 5 (May 1977):247-251.

[2] Goodrum, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH COLLECTIONS: BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

In the provision of a general research collection for public use the British Museum Library was considerably in advance of the Library of Congress for many years, due largely to the difference in their original purposes. To understand the needs that the British Museum Library was designed to meet, it is useful to examine some aspects of the social context in which it arose.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the common fund of European knowledge was vastly increased, with the rediscovery of classical culture, the unfolding of numerous geographical discoveries and the development of the scientific method of investigation all following (and in turn accelerating) the decay of medieval authority. By the late eighteenth century these new conditions had begun to affect the nature of the learned world. Scholarly inquiry began to be the profession of specialists, rather than the avocation of generalists. Its procedures became more exacting, communications between scholars became more formalized, and the volume of publications began to rise. Increasingly the private gentleman's library became inadequate for serious research.

At the same time, culture became more broadly diffused among the public. A small class of educated people began to emerge who were neither clerics nor lawyers, and they found in London few libraries to which they might have ready access. Esdaile gives the example of Samuel Johnson, who came to the city in 1737, and who could have claimed right of access only to a small library of standard books and manuscripts in St. Martin's Fields; for the rest of his needs, he would have had to borrow from the stock of booksellers and from the collections of friends (though once recognized as a scholar he was admitted to the Royal Library as well).[1]

The desire for a public library grew strong in educated London socity--the more so as such libraries had long since been established in the European capitals--and several proposals for its formation were put forth. The one that took hold at last was made in 1750 by two of the trustees of the Cotton Library, which though a private library had long been made accessible by the family, and which had repeatedly been urged as the nucleus of a public collection. The trustees petitioned the King, and subsequently Parliament, for the formation of a national library and museum. After considerable study and discussion, an act was passed in 1753 providing for the purchase of the collections of Sir Hans Sloane and of Robert and Edward Harley (only the manuscripts remained available from the latter); the housing of these collections together with the Cotton manuscripts; and the establishment of a board of trustees and an endowment for the administration of the library and museum thus formed. The recently vacated Montagu House in Bloomsbury was found in 1755 to be a suitable building, and in 1759 the British Museum was opened to the public.[1]

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[1] Esdaile, pp. 19-33, 189.

The Library at its origin then was both a public supplement to and an extension of the private scholarly library and, as such, reflected the state of recorded knowledge at the time. By modern standards, the collection was small and unspecialized, and the fact that the library and the museum were housed and administered together was a further reflection of the encyclopedic ambitions of a time when, as Esdaile says, "It was still possible for a man of wide intellectual curiosity to be, if not a doctor, at least an indigator universalis."[2] The collection was, in short, respectable, a good beginning, but not highly formalized as a repository of existing learning.

Likewise the Library's acquisitions, during the first fifty years, were not entirely systematic. Additions to the collection were usually made in increments of an entire personal collection, with no particular attempt being made to fill in gaps of knowledge. Nor was the Copyright Act of any great help in this regard, for as has been noted, it was at this time generally ignored. Funds for purchases were limited, amounting to about £300 a year, most of which was for a long time spent on foreign books.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 32-34; Arundell Esdaile, National Libraries of the World, 2d ed. (London: Library Association, 1957), pp. 1-3.

[2] Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 30-31.

[3] Ibid., pp. 49-50, 66-67.

These conditions began to change during the early nineteenth century, under the administrations of Joseph Planta and later of Sir Henry Ellis. Between 1799 and 1823 several important collections were acquired (this was still the usual method of purchase), including Lord Shelburne's historical papers; Francis Hargrave's law library; and Charles Burney's classical texts, materials on the history of the English stage, and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century newspapers. Finally, in 1823, King George IV offered to the government the second Royal Library, which had been founded after the first was given to the British Museum. George IV's library had been made a very considerable collection, numbering 65,000 books and 19,000 pamphlets, and its acquisition made necessary the demolition of Montagu House and the construction of larger quarters for the Museum.[1]

That deficiencies still existed, however, and that they were becoming increasingly evident to a growing body of readers, was shown by testimony before the House of Commons' Select Committee on the British Museum during its testimony of 1835-36. At that time, Panizzi considered the Museum Library among the finest in the world in terms of the proportion of valuable works in its collection, though in size it was surpassed by several European libraries. Prominent authors and scholars in various fields had praise for the courtesy of the Library's officers and the quality of its collections. These and other witnesses, however, complained of insufficiencies which made the Library less useful than it might have been. Edward Edwards' list of desiderata has been alluded to in connection with the Copyright Act. Both John Flint South, a surgeon and medical historian,[1] and Sir Richard Owen, the famous naturalist who later served as the first superintendent of the Museum's natural history departments,[2] mention the deficiencies in zoological literature as compared with the library of the College of Surgeons (which was put to some expense, they said, to collect what the Museum could not). Olinthus Gregory, Professor of Mathematics in the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, expressed his opinion that the library "must be altogether inadequate to meet the wishes and desires and reasonable expectation of literary men or inquiring men in this metropolis"; and Sir Harris Nicolas, a prolific antiquarian who had twice before investigated the affairs of public bodies whose work affected his own,[3] stated simply, "I do not consider it to be a library worthy of the country."[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 56-70.

The problem, aside from those associated with the Copyright Act, was inadequate funding. In Panizzi's opinion, once gifts and copyright acquisitions were counted, "not one-half of the books have been bought nor one-third of the value of the library has been procured with money voted by the nation; the nation has done almost nothing for the library." Robert Huish, an author who had consulted the Museum's collections for about ten years, agreed that "From the niggardly way in which those funds [for acquisition] are administered by Government, those deficiencies cannot be supplied. . . ."[1]

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[1] Dictionary of National Biography, 53:274-275.

[2] Ibid., 42:435-444. [3] Ibid., 41:41-44.

[4] Select Committee, Report, pars. 4776-4777, 3488-3594, 3617, 1158, 1189-1202 (pp. 99, 101, 281-291, 293, 388).

The following years brought some relief from this state of affairs, though no dramatic action was taken. The purchase fund almost tripled between 1832 and 1837, from £1,032 to £2,944, and in 1838 was increased by £1,000 more; in 1845 the first of a series of substantial grants was instituted for the purpose of making up deficiencies in the collection, a practice which continued for half a century and was of great benefit to the Library. Except for such periods of necessary stringency as the two world wars, the increase in grants continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, so that by 1969 an estimated three-quarters of the Library's income came from public funds. At the same time that Parliamentary funding began to be increased, the Library continued to add to its staff able scholars who helped guide acquisitions in their specialties; the Museum attracted people of this caliber almost from the beginning, but the attraction was doubtless enhanced by the efforts of Panizzi and other administrators to upgrade staff salaries.[2]

One other means by which the Library's collections have been considerably augmented is the exchange of official publications with other governments. The first agreements establishing such exchanges were made after a four-year inquiry (1876-1880) by a committee of the Treasury; through the activity of Francis Campbell, the Assistant in charge of official documents from 1884 to 1900, such agreements rapidly became an important source of publications. During the twentieth century the extent of coverage has been further increased, so that numerous foreign governments, including some in Asia and Africa, and a number of international bodies send their official publications to what is now the British Library. The material thus acquired is a very substantial part of the Library's collection, amounting to about thiry percent of total intake, though its usefulness is impaired by the lack of thorough indexing.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pars. 4785, 5012-5022 (pp. 389-390, 413-414).

[2] Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 96-104; Dainton Report, p. 9.

The combination of systematic purchases, copyright deposit, and foreign exchange brought the British Museum Library into the first rank of the world's research libraries by the end of the nineteenth century and has kept it in that position up to the present. The British Library today is not the world's largest library; it is surpassed in that respect by the Library of Congress, one or two American university libraries, and possibly the French Bibliothèque Nationale and a few Soviet institutions. The quality of its collections, however, is unsurpassed, covering "many subjects incomparably well" in the words of the Dainton committee, and the

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[1] Esdaile, British Museum Library, p. 224; Edward Miller, That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum (London: André Deutsch, 1973), pp. 276-277; R. J. Fulford, "The British Library Reference Division: Department of Printed Books," in British Librarianship Today, ed. W[ilfred] L[eonard] Saunders, A Library Association Centenary Volume (London: Library Association, 1976), pp. 64-65; G. E. Marrison, "The British Library Reference Division: The Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books," British Librarianship Today, p. 71; Dainton Report, par. 41 (p. 14).

Library has remained "by far the largest general collection of British publications of all periods."[1]

It should be noted again that the British Museum Library's research function was established very early, being in fact implicit in the character of the collections on which it was founded, and was never seriously questioned. Between Panizzi's famous declaration before the Select Committee in 1836 ("I want a poor student to have the same means of indulging his learned curiosity . . . as the richest man in the kingdom, as far as books go . . .")[2] and the Dainton committee's summation of the Library's function in 1969 (". . . to provide a national reference collection of books, contemporary and antique, British and foreign . . .")[3] there is no substantial difference. The difficulties outlined above were chiefly those of adequately fulfilling purposes already agreed on.

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[1] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1972 ed., s.v. "Library," pp. 1054-1055; Fulford, p. 64; Dainton Report, p. 9.

[2] Select Committee, Report, par. 4795 (p. 391).

[3] Dainton Report, p. 9.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH COLLECTIONS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Such was not the case with the Library of Congress, which was founded on the removal of the nation's capital to the new city of Washington in 1800. Prior to that time there had been no real library established by, or for the use of, the Federal government, though such a library had at one time been proposed. The two Houses of Congress had separately purchased a few essential works of reference during the first years of the Federal government. These numbered 243 in all by 1802, including legal texts, maps, some history and science, a few magazines, and Robert Burns by way of literature. For the rest of their research, members of Congress had made use of the libraries of New York and Philadelphia. No such facilities were available in Washington, however, and it soon became apparent that the legislators would have to establish a more substantial reference collection for themselves. Provision for this collection was made on motion of New Hampshire Senator Samuel Livermore, in the form of an addition to the "Act to make provision for the removal and accomodation of the Government of the United States," passed April 24, 1800:

> And be it further enacted, that for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress at the said city of Washington, and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing

> them therein the sum of five thousand dollars shall be, and hereby is, appropriated: . . ."[1]

A joint committee under the direction of Senator Samuel Dexter of Massachusetts was appointed to carry out the purchase and placement of the library, and promptly ordered an initial shipment of books from the firm of Caddell & Davies in London. These agents were able to locate all but a few of the items wanted, and after several months the first shipment of 152 titles in 740 volumes arrived in Washington, packed in the famous eleven hair trunks. ("We judged it best to send trunks rather than boxes," wrote the booksellers, "which after their arrival would have been of little or no value.")[2]

The question of how the newly acquired library would be maintained occasioned considerable debate in Congress, with differences of opinion along party lines and between the two houses as to the level of funding to be made available, the method of appointing a librarian, and the terms on which books would be lent. A compromise was reached on January 26, 1802, with the passage of "An Act Concerning the Library for the Use of Both Houses of Congress." Under this act, the recently purchased books along with the volumes already collected were to be housed in the former quarters of the House of Representatives. A librarian was to be appointed by the President of the United States, to be paid a sum not exceeding two dollars per day of attendance; no continuing appropriation for the maintenance or expansion of the library was designated.[1]

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[1] William Dawson Johnston, *History of the Library of Congress*, vol. 1: *1800-1864* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), pp. 17-23 (no further volumes of this work were published); Mearns, *The Story Up to Now*, p. 15; Goodrum, pp. 6-10.

[2] Johnston, p. 24.

The new library had been established within a fairly narrow range of subjects. The books ordered from Caddell & Davies included numerous histories, ancient and modern; accounts of explorations and travels; treatises on law, politics and commerce; more maps and atlases; and some biography and philosophy. The work of the second library committee, appointed under the act of 1802, enhanced the quality of the collection but kept it within much the same limits. This committee had as its task the expenditure of the $2,800 left from the appropriation granted in 1800. It appears to have been headed by Senator Abraham Baldwin of Georgia, a graduate of Yale and a mathematical and classical scholar of considerable repute. At the committee's request, President Jefferson compiled a list of desiderata for the library; Jefferson's accompanying letter, dated April 14, 1802, reflects Senator Baldwin's belief "that books of entertainment are not within the scope of it, and that books in other languages, where there are not translations of them, are not to be admitted freely." The catalog itself is illegible now (according to Johnston's account), and the records of subsequent purchases have apparently not survived. However, those purchases seem to have followed closely Jefferson's suggestions, the general nature of which is suggested in his letter:

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[1] Johnston, pp. 23-33; Goodrum, p. 11.

> . . . I have confined the catalogue to those branches of science which belong to the deliberations of the members as statesmen, and in these have omitted those classical books, ancient and modern, which gentlemen generally have in their libraries, but which can not properly claim a place in a collection made merely for the purpose of reference. . . . The two great encyclopedias[1] form a compleat supplement for the sciences omitted in the present collection, should occasion happen to arrive for recurring to them.[2]

During the next decade, however, the scope of the collection began to expand. Congress continued to vote annual appropriations for the Library, and by 1812 it contained about 3,000 volumes, according to the catalog printed in that year. Johnston reports that the books were now classified under these headings:

> Sacred history; ecclesiastical history; civil history, including chronology, biography, antiquities, etc.; geography and topography; voyages and travels; law; ethics, or the moral system in general; theology and mythology; logic, rhetori, and criticism; dictionaries, grammars and treatises on education; general and local politics; political economy, etc.; trade and commerce; military and naval tactics; agriculture, rural economy, etc.; natural history; natural and experimental philosophy, etc.; medicine, surgery, and chemistry; poetry and the drama; works of fiction, wit, etc.; arts and sciences, and miscellaneous literature; gazettes, maps, charts, and plans.

That the Library's strengths in non-political literature were considerable is indicated by the observation in Walsh's American Register (in 1817) that it "consisted of the best English works on history, politics, and polite literature."[3]

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[1] Though both the American Encyclopaedia (18 v., q.) and Chambers' Dictionary of Arts and Sciences (2 v., f.) were included in the purchase as listed in the Library's catalog of 1815, the reference here is more likely to the Encyclopedie de Diderot et D'Alembert (39 v., oct.) and the Encyclopedie Methodique de Pancoucke (136 1/2 v., q.) See United States, Library of Congress, Catalogue of the Library of the United States (Washington: Jonathan Elliot, 1815), p. 169.

[2] Salamanca, pp. 38-39; Johnston, pp. 35-37. [3] Johnston, p. 49.

There are at least two possible reasons for this shift in emphasis. First, the academic training of the early legislators was general; their arguments were as likely to be grounded in philosophy or classical literature as in political science. A wide variety of occupations was represented in Congress at that time; and the best-educated members, who would make frequent use of the Library, were as likely to be clergymen, scientists, or physicians as lawyers. Secondly, there were no public libraries in the city before 1814, so that the Library of Congress came to be resorted to as a place of amusement and private study.[1] Nevertheless, the Library for the most part maintained a quiet course in the Capitol building, reliably but not generously funded by Congress, and, aside from an occasional notice in the newspapers, remaining outside the public eye.

This state of affairs was abruptly changed on the evening of August 24, 1814. Around the middle of that month the British army had been spotted in the Chesapeake, and most departments of the Government had been clearing out their papers since the nineteenth; the removal of the Library of Congress, however, had not begun. The Librarian, Patrick Magruder, was absent at this time because of illness, and his assistant, J. T. Frost, was in charge. On the afternoon of the 21st a Mr. Burch of the House Clerk's office, who along with most of his fellow employees had been conscripted into the militia, was sent back to assist in removing the Library. However, he and Frost were under orders to wait until word was received that the War Department offices were being cleared, and because of delayed communications this word did not reach them until noon on the 22d. By this time vehicles were almost impossible to find, and it finally became necessary to hire an oxcart from outside the city. With this Burch and Frost moved out what they could until further action became impossible on Wednesday morning, the 24th. On that evening the British, under the joint command of General Ross and Admiral Cockburn, entered the city. During the evening a contingent of Admiral Cockburn's troops burned the Capitol, nearly destroying the room housing the Library.

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[1] Johnston, pp. 48-49.

The value of the portion of the Library destroyed in the fire is not precisely clear. Burch and Frost claimed that the books lost "were all duplicates of those which have been preserved," but the committee investigating the incident reported "that they have satisfactory evidence that the Library of Congress . . . was destroyed by the enemy on the 24th of August last." What is certain is the indignation the event aroused both in Congress and among the public, who had been inclined to ignore the Library previously. The burning of the Library was compared to the sack of Alexandria; and even some Britons, including General Ross, deplored the act as contrary to the principles of civilized warfare (though American troops had already damaged the Parliamentary library in the spring of 1813 at York, Upper Canada). Although the failure to clear out the library in time was the result of a number of factors, Patrick Magruder bore the brunt of Congress' wrath, resigning under pressure on January 28, 1815. Out of this storm of publicity and recrimination arose a determination, on the part of some at least, to replace the lost library quickly and completely.[1]

Fortunately, an excellent opportunity to do so was at hand. Thomas Jefferson, during his years of residence in Europe and America, had collected a large library of high quality in most of the fields recognized in his time. He had considered leaving it to the University of Virginia or to Congress at his death, but now the capital's need for a new library coincided with the former President's own financial difficulties. On September 21 Jefferson wrote to his friend Samuel Harrison Smith, then Commissioner of Revenue, remarking on the difficulty of ordering books from Europe in wartime and offering Congress his library on liberal terms.

Jefferson said of his library:

> I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense, to make it what it is. While residing in Paris, I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two in examining all the principal bookstores, turning over every book with my own hand, and putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science. Besides this, I had standing orders during the whole time I was in Europe, on its principal book-marts, particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid, and London, for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris. So that, in that department particularly, such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected . . . During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure, also, whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation. So that the collection, which I suppose is of between nine and ten thousand volumes, while it includes what is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally, extends more particularly to whatever belongs to the American statesman.[2]

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[1] Johnston, pp. 65-68; Goodrum, p. 13; Salamanca, pp. 71-81; Monro MacCloskey, Our National Attic: The Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives (New York: Richard Rosen Press, 1968), pp. 24-25.

[2] Johnston, pp. 69-71; MacCloskey, pp. 25-26; Goodrum, pp. 13-14.

The debate touched off by this offer illuminates the politics of the day as well as the division of opinion on the proper nature and function of the Congressional Library. Jefferson's political opponents tended to oppose the purchase; Cyrus King, for example, objected with reference to the character of the former President, a man "who had inflicted greater injury on our country than any other, except Madison." Other objections--these being raised by a few of Jefferson's political supporters as well as by his opponents--bore on the price of the collection and its nature. Mention was made of the library's "miscellaneous and almost exclusive literary character"; the number of philosophical works and "books of an atheistical, irreligious, and immoral tendency"; and the numerous books "in languages which many can not read," as King said, "and most ought not." On the other hand, supporters of the purchase pointed out that the collection was an admirable one which could not now be brought together without great expense and effort, and which in some particulars could not be duplicated at all. An editorial in the Petersburg Courier maintained that

> The objections . . . reflect the greatest discredit upon the national character of this country. What can be a greater stigma upon the members of our National Legislature than to assert that books of a philosophical description are improper for their perusal?
>
> Another great objection is, that Mr. Jefferson's library contains the works of Voltaire--what a pitiful observation! Will it be said that the works of an author, which hold the first rank on the shelves of all the libraries of Europe, and which may be found in the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, and in those of the four Scotch universities, for the express purpose to be perused by students, should be prohibited or forbidden a place in the Library of Congress?[1]

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[1] Salamanca, pp. 103-104; MacCloskey, p. 26; Goodrum, p. 14; Johnston, p. 80.

The reference to the libraries of the English and Scottish universities--all deposit libraries at the time--is significant, in that it expresses the opinion of some that the Library of Congress should now take on their national and scholarly character. So, too, is the National Intelligencer's article of July 31, 1815 under the title "Congressional Library," which described the Library after Jefferson's books had been added to it:

> In all the civilized nations of Europe there are national libraries, the selection and increase of which occupy much of governmental attention. In a country of such general intelligence as this, so laudable an example should by all means be imitated, and the Congressional or National Library of the United States become the great repository of the literature of the world--the medium of information and the source of improvement and gratification to all whom inclination may prompt or whom curiosity may lead to literature. We are happy to say that this is the foundation of such an establishment and that by the fostering patronage of Government it may, in a few years, be made the equal to the most extensive and splendid libraries of Europe, the sneers of the British editors to the contrary notwithstanding. . . . As the foundation of a great national library this is an excellent collection . . .

Similarly, Walsh's American Register said:

> A better nursery or substratum for a great National Library could not be found, and it surely will be admitted that nothing less is to come within the aim of Congress, both on the score of pride and patriotism.
>
> There is an absolute obligation on the part of the Federal Government, to provide in the Federal metropolis, in shape of a library, a great reservoir of instruction in all the departments of human knowledge for the use of the public as well as of its own members . . .[1]

In approving the purchase of Jefferson's books, Congress aligned itself with these opinions and radically changed the character of their library. Instead of a few necessary volumes of reference, or a general collection to be taken up for recreation or mined for bons mots, they now had a distinguished scholar's library, one which Jefferson had twice contemplated making the basis of a university library.[1] At the same time, the administration of the Library was made more autonomous with the separation of the office of Librarian of Congress from that of Clerk of the House (George Watterston being the first librarian under the new arrangement), and the Library Committee began to lay ambitious plans for the development of the collection. Watterston indicated in a National Intelligencer notice on September 15, 1815, that he now understood Congress' intent as being "to make [the Library] the great national depository of literature and science, and in some instances of the arts also." The Committee, if not the whole of Congress, concurred in these plans and, from 1815 onwards, pressed for depository status and requested considerably more liberal appropriations than had been given previously.[2]

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[1] Johnston, pp. 138-139.

They were not at first successful, however, as Congress remained economically minded. From 1817 to 1822 the average appropriation voted for the Library was $1,000 per annum; in 1823 this was increased to $2,000. At the same time legislative measures allowing deposit in the Library of copyright books and of executive reports and documents failed to be enacted. In 1824, the attention of Congress began to be turned towards the Library's deficiencies as an intellectual resource and the means of remedying these; the Committee on Ways and Means reported on February 24 that

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[1] Ibid., p. 69. The first was the University of Virginia, the second a National University which never developed.

[2] Ibid., pp. 138, 150, 158.

> . . . the committee have discovered the Library of Congress, in its present state, to be defective in all the principal branches of literature; and they deem it of the first necessity that this deficiency should be speedily supplied . . .

The Committee recommended an appropriation of $5,000 for acquisitions, which was approved by both the House and the Senate; further, an act was passed in 1825 allowing the duties that were collected on imported maps, books, and charts to be used by the Library. Thereafter acquisitions proceeded on a larger scale.

Not only the quantity, but the quality of the collection was carefully overseen by the Library's administrators during this time. The Library Committee was chaired from 1817 into the mid-twenties by Mahon Dickerson of New Jersey, a man of scientific interests and a great lover of books; from 1825 on the Committee's most active member was Edward Everett, whose tastes were literary and who was able to supplement the collection in areas Dickerson had not been well acquainted with. Watterston himself was for a time one of the more prominent literary figures in Washington, and of course the Library benefitted from Thomas Jefferson's knowledge and concern throughout his life.[1]

The result of the more scholarly and active bent on the part of the Library's administration was that by 1830 the collection was fourth in size among the nation's libraries, with 16,000 volumes; Mrs. Trollope, in her memoir of a visit to the United States, compared it to an English gentleman's library, but with less Latin, Greek and Italian. However, the level of the collection seems not to have risen above that of a good public library for a few decades. This was very largely due to the fact that Congress remained frugally disposed toward the Library. Though the annual appropriation was increased to $5,000 in 1824 and remained at that level (with three years' exception) until 1852, this proved insufficient to acquire several collections that would have been of great value. The tightness of funds was aggravated by the ineffective operation of the copyright laws during this period.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 107-118, 158-164.

In addition, the Library's bibliographic policies during approximately the second third of the nineteenth century were not calculated to add greatly to the distinction of its collections. In 1829, on Andrew Jackson's assumption of the Presidency, Watterston was replaced as Librarian of Congress by John Silva Meehan. Meehan had been a printer and publisher; his contemporaries describe him as an amiable and hard-working man, but he seems not to have had the scholarly outlook of his predecessor or of the more active members of the Library Committee in Watterston's time. His attention was turned toward day-to-day problems of administration, which he handled capably but without any well-defined conception of how the Library should be developing; and in matters of acquisition his interests lay rather more with the Library's popular works than with its research collections, so that acquisitions tended to follow shifts in popular demand. These limitations of outlook affected the Library's development materially after December 24, 1851, when a fire spread through the flues of the Capitol building to the Library's quarters and destroyed some 35,000 of its 55,000 volumes. (This was the Library's third fire; the second, in 1825, had not caused much damage.) This time Congress was not divided in its intention to restore the Library, voting for a new fireproof apartment which cost $100,000 to complete, and for book appropriations which totaled $85,000 for the 1852-1853 fiscal year. This would have been an opportunity, like the first destruction of the Library, to lay a new and sounder foundation; as it was, however, part of the new appropriation was based on a list of what had been lost, and much of the rest was bought economically but without great discrimination. As a result the Library of Congress was "so far . . . surpassed among American libraries" in 1865 "that in an article on American libraries published that year in Harper's Monthly, the Library of Congress was not mentioned!"[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 168-169, 515; Salamanca, pp. 183-184.

One further episode under Meehan's administration deserves mention, not for any material effect on the strength of the Library's collection but because it foreshadowed later and more successful programs. This was the visit to Washington in 1839 of one Alexandre Vattemare. A native of Paris, a physician and a prisoner in his youth, and later a noted ventriolquist, Vattemare was a scholar and bookman as well. During his tours of Europe he had discovered how chaotic was the dispersion of books and manuscripts across the continent. Works needed and lacking in one collection were often to be found as un[illegible]ted duplicates elsewhere; the volumes of a set might be scattered over several countries; and materials of great potential value to one place might lie forgotten in another.

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[1] Johnston, p. 516; Salamanca, pp. 157-194; Frederick W. Ashley, "Three Eras in the Library of Congress," in Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam, ed. William Warner Bishop and Andrew Keogh (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 57. The quote is from Ashley.

Vattemare had devised a plan of national and international exchanges which had, by his own account, gained considerale acceptance and resulted in the widespread exchange in Europe of both retrospective and modern publications. The purpose of his American visit was to persuade Congress to join the cooperative network. Congress was receptive to the plan, and in 1840 passed a resolution allowing the Librarian of Congress to exchange government documents and duplicates existing in the Library for other works, and providing for the printing of extra copies of future Congressional documents for exchange. Vattemare returned to Europe with some 700 volumes of Congressional documents, and the Library subsequently received 340 volumes from France and several inquiries from other governments; but thereafter few or no exchanges were carried out, since there was no agent for the purpose. In 1848 a series of acts and resolutions of Congress resulted in the appointment of Vattemare himself, who was once again visiting America, as agent for the exchange program. However, this too proved unsatisfactory. Vattemare was unable to interest Congress in his plan for an extended system, embracing domestic as well as foreign exchanges and state and local as well as federal publications. Congress, for its part, grew dissatisfied with the condition and completeness of the documents received from France, criticized Vattemare's performance as their agent, and in 1852 repealed the act by which the exchanges had been transacted.[1]

The research function of the Library, like its function as a center of copyright activity, came to full fruition only under the administration of A. R. Spofford. Unlike his immediate predecessor, Spofford was wholeheartedly dedicated to his work; and unlike Meehan, he had a clear idea of the Library's function as a national institution and the education and experience necessary to carry out his idea. In addition, the power of directing the allocation of funds for acquisition had been removed from the Library Committee and given to the Librarian during Meehan's administration, and the unfortunate wrangles associated with past appointments to the position of Librarian had created a general opinion that the administration of the Library should be kept free of political considerations; so Spofford had greater independence in his work than any previous Librarian.

One of the three most important events during Spofford's administration which confirmed the Library's place as a center for research was the establishment of effective copyright procedures from 1865 to 1870. This process has been discussed in a previous chapter and will not be detailed here; its importance in this regard is that the influx of deposit publications provided a large part of the volume of materials needed for a general research collection of national stature and insured that current materials of importance published in the United States would be received by the Library. Also, the funds that were saved through acquisition by deposit could now be spent on valuable retrospective and foreign materials.

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[1] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 49-55; Johnston, pp. 254-265.

The second of these events involved the Library's relations with the Smithsonian Institution, which for some time was regarded as a suitable candidate for the position of the country's national library. The Institution had been established in 1848 in fulfillment of the 1838 bequest by the estate of James Smithson "to the United States of America . . . [of] an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." In some ways the Institution was originally better suited than the Library of Congress to become a national library. It had originally been founded as a public and national institution and was concerned with "the increase and diffusion of knowledge" generally rather than with some more specialized or partisan aim. Certainly the idea of the Smithsonian as national library had a determined and able advocate in its librarian, Charles Coffin Jewett, who gave considerable attention to the balanced and comprehensive growth of the collection. His plans, however, conflicted with those of the Institution's secretary (and Jewett's superior), Joseph Henry, who advocated a more specialized program of research and publication. The views of the two men proving irreconcilable, Jewett resigned or was fired (accounts vary on this point) on July 10, 1854, and the development of the Institution progressed according to Henry's design.

In 1865 the near destruction of the Smithsonian library by fire brought attention to the library's unsafe location and the

Institution's lack of space. By this time the idea of a transfer of holdings to the Library of Congress was agreeable to both Spofford and Henry, and an act effecting the transfer was passed on April 5, 1866. The transaction not only greatly enhanced the collection of the Library of Congress at the time of transfer but provided an important new source of acquisitions, since the act also provided for the transfer of all new publications acquired in the future under the Smithsonian's system of exchanges. This system was already quite extensive--the Institution sent its Annual Reports (which included scientific publications), Contributions to Knowledge, and Miscellaneous Collections to foreign academies and scientific societies and by 1867 was receiving in return around 1,500 volumes of books annually. By 1946 nearly a million of the volumes in the Library of Congress had come through the Smithsonian deposit.[1]

The third development affecting the Library's research strength was the establishment of a system of foreign exchanges in government documents, instituted apparently as a complement to the Smithsonian exchanges. This was provided for in Congressional resolutions of 1867, ordering 50 to 100 copies of all documents to be placed at the Joint Library Committee's disposal for foreign exchange, and of 1868, clarifying the Congressional Printer's obligation to print the extra copies. The Library met with some difficulty in getting a full supply of foreign documents; in 1887 Spofford had still to report "that 38 foreign governments have for years received all the publications of the United States Government . . . that from most of these countries very imperfect and inadequate returns have been received, while from some of them nothing has come in exchange; . . ." During 1884-85 an agent of the Smithsonian Institution, half his expenses being paid by the Library of Congress, was sent abroad to correct this imbalance and had great success in his attempt, though Congress did not agree to make the agency permanent. The Brussels Convention of 1886, which proposed the establishment in its eight participating states (the United States, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, and Switzerland) of bureaus in charge of document exchanges, met with more favor and was ratified in Congress in 1888. Thereafter collections from countries within the Convention were improved, but remained unreliable from many others. The aid of the State Department was enlisted in 1898, soon after Young's appointment as Librarian, in the collection of documents and other materials, and the rate of acquisition soon increased dramatically. By 1974 the Library was exchanging "full sets" of documents (about 12,000 items a year) with sixty-one foreign governments and "partial sets" (about 2,000 items) with forty-six more; in addition, over 22,000 separate agreements exist whereby U.S. documents are exchanged for the publications of private but tax-supported institutions such as Heidelberg University and the Louvre.[1]

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[1] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 99-105; Johnston, pp. 254-265.

MacCloskey has remarked that "within the next sixty-four days" after Spofford's appointment "the Library took a longer step forward toward its ultimate position among the libraries of the nation and the world than it had in the sixty-four years since its establishment."[1] Certainly the establishment of copyright deposit and foreign exchange procedures, along with the acquisition of the Smithsonian collections and exchanges, confirmed the Library's transformation from a utilitarian reference collection into a research institution of national and even international standing. As with the British Museum Library, once this broadening of purpose had been achieved the developments which followed--continued growth, improved staffing, and the establishment of proper bibliographic control--were only means to the furtherance of an end that had already been decided on.

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[1] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 104-106, 148-151; Goodrum, pp. 71-73; see also Library of Congress, Reports, 1867-1899.

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[1] MacCloskey, p. 41.

CHAPTER VI

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ACTIVITIES: BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY

The third class of activities engaged in by national libraries, that comprising the bibliographic functions, is of ancient origins--the library at Akkad in Babylonia, built in the seventeenth century B.C., had a subject catalog as well as papyrus circulation slips[1]--but has attained its present sophistication only in comparatively modern times. Furthermore, these functions have developed to some extent independently of each other, further delaying their coalescence within the national libraries. This chapter and the one following will consider the two broad divisions of the national bibliographic functions--the publication of national bibliographies and the centralization of cataloging activities--as they developed in the British Museum Library and the Library of Congress.

Cataloging in the British Museum Library, as in most libraries of similar age, had its origin in the compilation of lists of holdings. The Library's first catalog was that of the Harleian manuscripts, prepared for the most part by 1753 and published from 1759 to 1762. This was followed in 1782 by the catalog of the Sloane, Birch, and Additional Manuscripts, prepared by Samuel Ayscough, a self-educated cleric and cataloger who later served with distinction on the Library's regular staff. The first catalog of the Printed Books, in preparation since 1771, appeared in 1787. (It is worth noting that this catalog gives author, title, place and date of publication, and size, but offers no guide to the location of a book on the shelves.) During this same period Ayscough prepared an Index of Charters and Rolls which was not published, and Thomas Astle, a Trustee, compiled a catalog of the Cotton Manuscripts which was published independently in 1777.[1]

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[1] Dorothy May Morris, A History of Cataloguing and Cataloguing Methods 1100-1850: With an Introductory Survey of Ancient Times (London: Grafton & Co., 1939), p. 3.

The preparation of catalogs had been suggested by the Trustees as early as 1759 but must have occupied very little of the officers' time during the eighteenth century. Officers were at first required to attend for two six-hour days per week, most of this time being devoted to the guidance of visitors to the Museum. In 1761 the required attendance was reduced to two hours a day on two and three days in alternate weeks, with extra work being paid extra; it seems likely enough that on such a schedule cataloging would necessarily become extra work, if it were done at all.[2]

The end of the century brought a change in the leadership of the Library. Dr. Charles Morton, Principal Librarian since 1776, died in 1799, and to replace him the Trustees, recognizing the need for more vigorous leadership, chose "the one man on the [senior] staff who was neither an elderly clergyman nor a non-practising physician,"[1] Joseph Planta. It was probably Planta's urging, as much as the acquisition of several new collections, that led to the establishment by the Trustees in 1805 and 1806 of committees to study the operation of the Museum's departments and consider possible improvements. The deliberations of the first committee with regard to the Library centered mainly on its catalogs. The principal recommendations under this heading were that the accession titles which existed for the Printed Books be made into a new catalog; that shelf inventories (for the Trustees' visits) be prepared; that the system of classification, drawn up for the arrangement of the Library's shelves in 1793 by Ayscough and since revised by Sir Henry Ellis, be printed and the bookcases labeled; and that several catalogs be prepared or revised for manuscript collections. The Sub-Committee of 1806 continued the discussion of the Printed Books catalogs, recommending that an abridged alphabetical catalog be produced for the present and a classed catalog later. The alphabetical catalog, in seven volumes, was published from 1813 to 1819; the classed catalog, which provoked lively discussion when it was proposed and for decades after, never materialized.

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[1] Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 44, 48; Gertrude Burford Rawlings, The British Museum Library (London: Grafton & Co.; New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1916), pp. 148-149.

[2] Esdaile, British Museum Library, p. 47.

In examining the staff arrangements, the committee of 1805 found that no formal assignment of cataloging duties had ever been made. As mentioned above, the Trustees had asked their officers to include the preparation of catalogs in their activities, but for the most part this request had not been regarded as binding. The situation was aggravated by the fact that, though annual reports had been ordered by the Trustees in 1801, only one had been made, and that only by special request. The committee was concerned about this state of affairs, being particularly conscious that Parliament might be displeased at having paid "£2,000 a year for having the House shown to visitors and the Reading Room supervised." Accordingly the final report of the committees, dated February 14, 1807, contained a recommendation that reports be made not only annually but monthly (the rules as enacted by the Trustees changed this to a quarterly interval), in order to provide a continuing check on work being done. However, the working hours required of the staff were not extended, and the system of extra payment for cataloging done on extra time was retained.[1]

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[1] Miller, That Noble Cabinet, p. 91.

In the years following this report, the publication of catalogs proceeded at a fairly brisk pace. The most significant, the revised printed books catalog published in 1813-1819, has been mentioned. The work on this was begun in 1807 by Henry Baber and Henry Ellis, then Assistant Keeper and Keeper of Printed Books respectively (and Planta, by Edwards' account). The first task was the addition of all new titles acquired since 1787, which took two years; another year was spent in revising the old entries (part of this revision was the insertion of pressmarks, the shelves of the Library having been numbered and marked according to Ayscough's classification). The result was principally an alphabetical author catalog, though with a few class headings.[1] Although there were some important errors--caused largely by the practice of consulting only the title page of a work when cataloging[2]--the catalog was described thirty years later as having "done great credit to the abilities and assiduity of the two gentlemen by whose joint labor it was in the main executed," particularly as they had done the work under pressure of time.[3]

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[1] Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 72-73.

Other catalogs published under Planta included the new Cotton Catalogue (1802), a revision of the Harleian catalog (1808), and catalogs of the Hargrave (1818) and Lansdowne (1819) manuscripts. In addition to these, a Synopsis of the entire Museum was published in 1801 and reprinted several times; Ayscough's classification was published as an appendix to this and also separately.[4]

After the publication of these catalogs, then, access to the greater part of the Library's collection was primarily by author, with some assistance from the subject index and the classification schedule. There was a school of thought, however, which advocated a subject rather than an author and title catalog, and the idea of such a catalog was, as we have seen, entertained for a time by the

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[1] Rawlings, p. 149; Edward Edwards, Lives of the Founders of the British Museum; with Notices of its Chief Augmentors and Other Benefactors, 1570-1870, 2 vols. (London: Trübner and Co., 1870), 2:523.

[2] Norris, p. 201; Richard Garnett, "The Past, Present, and Future of the British Museum Catalogue," in Essays in Librarianship and Bibliography (London: George Allen, 1899), pp. 88-89.

[3] Commissioners, Report, p. 15.

[4] Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 74-75, 340, 358.

Trustees of the Museum. In 1825--the acquisition of George III's library having painfully illustrated the great disadvantage of even the best printed catalog, its rapid obsolescence--a noted bibliographer, the Reverend T. Hartwell Horne, presented to the Trustees his Outlines for the Classification of a Library, followed by Observations on the Manner in Which Titles of Books Are to Be Entered and Classed. Horne was commissioned in 1826 to begin the preparation of a classed catalog according to the principles set forth in his two monographs. However, when called on in 1834 to report on his progress, he had to admit that little had been made. He had had assistants, but these had left or been promoted to other work; his own classification of "chemical and medical philosophy," with its twenty divisions and many recondite subdivisions, Garnett recommends "to the study of those who think classification a simple matter, or a classed catalogue serviceable otherwise than as an index to an alphabetical one." In short, after an expenditure of £7,000 and a period of eight years, the project had reached the stage only of arranging titles, and the Trustees called a halt to it.[1]

Still, the deficiencies of the existing catalog were becoming increasingly obvious. Space had been left on the pages for the addition of new titles in manuscript, but these had rapidly been filled, and some pages were so crowded with print and script as to be hardly legible; thereafter the original volumes had to be broken up, inlaid on larger sheets, and interleaved with further manuscript entries, making 23 folio in place of 7 octavo volumes.[1] Dissatisfaction with some aspects of the Museum's services, including the state of the Library's catalogs, had begun to be voiced in the press, and in April of 1834 the Trustees appointed a Subcommittee to consider the preparation of a new, comprehensive catalog of the Library's collections. One of the subcommittee's assignments--foreshadowing years of acrimonious debates to come--was to arrive at an estimate of the time required for a printed and for a manuscript catalog.

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[1] Norris, pp. 201-203; Garnett, pp. 89-90. The outcome of his project was not taken as a reflection on Horne's considerable cataloging skills; he was made a regular officer of the Museum and later worked with Panizzi, J. H. Glover, and a Dr. Schier (to whose full name I have been able to find no reference) on the subsequent revision of the general catalog.

On April 24 Baber responded to the subcommittee's inquiries with a plan for a strictly alphabetical catalog, having entries under authors' last names (or key words of the title for anonymous works), with full descriptions according to detailed rules. He recommended that one officer supervise the preparation, urging that Panizzi, who had joined the Library in 1831 as an Extra Assistant in the Printed Books, be considered for this task. Once the catalog was completed, Baber estimated, it could be printed within three years. The Trustees were not ready to accept this plan, however. To begin with, they were still considering the possibility of a classed catalog, and some time was spent discussing this matter; Baber noted that the titles could be prepared in such a way as to be rearranged in classes later, if desired. Finally the subcommittee agreed to the idea of an alphabetical catalog but still rejected Baber's plan for producing it; they recommended that Panizzi, J. H. Glover (an assitant librarian in the Royal Library), and Horne work on the catalog without a single supervisor. Baber bowed to necessity, suggested the addition of a fourth officer for Germanic and other North European languages, and was instructed (over Panizzi's protests) to proceed with the second plan. Copies of the provisional cataloging rules were distributed and tne work began.[1]

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[1] Rawlings, pp. 150-151.

It was soon interrupted. The eighteen-thirties were a reforming period. The old barriers and privileges of class were beginning to break down, and as Miller perhaps too dourly expresses it, "eager members of the House of Commons were looking busily for the slightest sign of a comfortable sinecure, inherited from the more tolerant days of the eighteenth century."[2] What finally brought the British Museum to the official notice of the House was the firing for inefficiency of John Millard, an employee of the Department of Manuscripts who, as it happened, had some influence in Parliamentary circles. The new member from Lambeth, Benjamin Hawes, heard of Millard's firing and called for an investigation. A Select Committee was formed, meeting in 1835 and again, with reduced membership, in 1836. Their investigation went considerably beyond the dismissal of Millard (which, in fact, was soon determined to have been justified), extending to the governance of the Museum generally; among other matters, the question of what the Library's catalogs should be was much debated.

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[1] Miller, Prince of Librarians, pp. 109-110; That Noble Cabinet, pp. 136-137.

[2] Miller, Prince of Librarians, p. 112.

The most important of the cataloging issues discussed was, again, the relative merits of classed and alphabetical catalogs. The classed catalog had numerous supporters, especially among scientific men. Edward Edwards, who had not yet joined the Library's staff but had been an interested reader for some time, testified at length on the desirability of such a catalog: "It seems to me," he said on June 2, 1836, "that the great difficulties of research in the reading-room of the British Museum are twofold, and arise, first, from the want of classed catalogues; and secondly, from the defects of the present alphabetical catalogues, both in plan and actual condition." He went on to describe a complicated and often inconclusive procedure by which, in lieu of a classed catalog, readers consulted a subject in Watts' Bibliotheca Britannica and then attempted to find titles listed therein in the general and Royal Library catalogs and in the yearly addenda lists.[1]

Olinthus Gregory, whose testimony is alluded to in chapter IV, believed that a good classed catalog was essential not only for research, but for judicious purchases by a library.[2] Some testimony, however, showed little understanding of the practical problems of compiling a catalog. Mr. James Scott Bowerbank, a fellow of the Geological and Zoological Societies and a member of the Entomological

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[1] Select Committee, Report, par. 4743 (p. 381).

[2] Ibid., pars. 3493-3494 (p. 281).

Society, described how he had produced a classed list from a publisher's alphabetical catalog:

> I could readily classify at the rate of 1,000 a day . . . at that rate the classification might be advanced in about 34 weeks, supposing 200,000 works to be numbered. . . . [The method used] was going through the catalogue and marking Z against Zoology, C against Conchology, and so on.[1]

The senior officers of the Library for the most part testified in favor of the existing alphabetical catalog, though not all for the same reasons. Sir Henry Ellis, reflecting the assumptions of an earlier period, believed that an alphabetical catalog was by far the more useful of the two types because a scholar would certainly know the names of all who had written in his field; he also commented on the expense of producing a classed catalog.[2] Baber cautioned that

> I think it is a bold thing to undertake a classed catalogue of a large library to any extent. . . . It is desirable, but I think it is more desirable that there should be an alphabetical catalogue, and that alphabetical catalogue should have a very full index of matters, &c., to it.[3]

Panizzi went further, saying that

> I have a great objection to what are called classed catalogues. I think it is impossible to make a good one; I never heard of any. I never heard of two men agreeing on the plan of a classed catalogue. . . . For scientific purposes particularly, classed catalogues 40 or 50 years old, on a scientific plan, cannot possibly be now of use, because the changes which have taken place . . . are such that you must be reclassing every day.[4]

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[1] Ibid., pars. 840, 936-937 (pp. 73, 81).

[2] Ibid., pars. 1690-1694, 1774, 1779-1790.

[3] Ibid., pars. 4615, 4617 (p. 369).

[4] Ibid., par. 4855 (pp. 398-399). Panizzi was in fact engaged in compiling a classed catalog for the Royal Society's library at this time; his experiences seem to have strengthened rather than moderated his dislike of such catalogs. See Miller, Prince of Librarians, pp. 84-88.

The Committee recommended in their report merely that catalogs should be prepared and printed, without addressing the question of classed versus alphabetical arrangement.[1] But the Trustees, impressed with the well-documented arguments of their officers and no doubt mindful of their own experience with Horne's project, elected to continue with the production of an alphabetical catalog. Unfortunately they were determined to make it a printed one, and to have the printing done as soon as possible. Panizzi (who became responsible for this project on being made Keeper of Printed Books in 1837) did his best to dissuade them, as his long-standing preference was for a catalog in manuscript. Finally he agreed to a printed catalog, but urged that printing be delayed until the actual cataloging was complete; however, the Trustees wanted to begin making volumes available to the public as soon as possible and ordered Panizzi to proceed letter by letter, completing the work by 1844.

Panizzi was enraged at being given what he considered an impossible assignment, but having no choice, he and his assistants continued as they were instructed. In 1840 the first volume finally appeared. It proved to be very defective, as Panizzi had predicted. Subsequent revision of the old catalog revealed entries that should have gone under A and numerous cross-references that should have been made from that letter. Thereafter no further volumes were printed. Acrimonious communications were exchanged, the Trustees demanding to know why more rapid progress was not being made, Panizzi insisting that the work could proceed no faster and that it would be impossible to print the catalog properly before its completion, if indeed it would finally be found worth printing at all. Gradually his arguments began to make an impression on the Trustees, and at last, in 1847, the decision was made to have the catalog prepared in manuscript.[1]

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[1] Esdaile, British Museum Library, p. 93.

None of these developments were of immediate benefit to the Library's readers. Some of these grew weary of waiting for a perfected catalog to appear in the Reading Room, wishing instead for something simple and practical; they would probably have agreed with Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, who, noting a reference in the printed volume from the Annual Register to "Periodical Publications," remarked acidly, "he might almost as well be referred to the Millennium, for who can tell when either will appear?"[2] Readers complained of the overcrowding in the Reading Room and the difficulty in getting admission tickets. Scientists considered the Natural History departments neglected and urged that scientific men be appointed to the Board of Trustees. Demands for an investigation were made in Parliament and seconded by Panizzi, who looked for a chance to vindicate himself (and never shied away from a fight in any case). Finally, on June 17, 1847, a Royal Commission was appointed "to inquire into the constitution and government of the British Museum."[3]

The voluminous testimony regarding the Library's catalogs--occupying 18 pages in the index of the Commission's minutes--now focused in large part on the utility of the detailed and painstaking construction of the new catalog. Several witnesses called the catalog overfull. The Reverend Josiah Forshall, Secretary of the Museum, was of the opinion that "The great and chief merit of the catalogue of such a library [as that of the Museum] is its succinctness, and the larger the library the more succinct the catalogues should be."[1] John Bruce, an antiquarian[2] who had frequented the reading room for many years, considered the published volume to have great merit, "but, on the other hand, it does not appear to me to be such a catalogue as if completed could be put forth in reference to the vast extent of the Museum Library." Though admitting that he had had no experience in the construction of catalogs, he objected to what he considered the unnecessary information contained in many entries and to the numerous cross-references, especially those occasioned by the heading "Academies."[3]

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[1] Miller, Prince of Librarians, pp. 139-147; Esdaile, British Museum Library, pp. 111-112.

[2] In his Animadversions on the Library and Catalogues of the British Museum; quoted in Rawlings, pp. 155-156.

[3] Miller, That Noble Cabinet, pp. 172-174.

Probably the most formidable advocate of a simplified approach was John Payne Collier, a Shakespearian scholar and the Librarian to the Duke of Devonshire, now acting as Secretary to the Commission--an equivocal position, of course, considering his outspoken views. Collier stated that Panizzi had made unnecessary difficulties for himself in compiling the new catalog and implied that the Keeper of Printed Books had the advancement of his own reputation in mind, "very likely unconsciously," at the expense of the advancement of learning. He suggested the short-entry catalog of the Library of the

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[1] Commissioners, Report, p. 356.

[2] Dictionary of National Biography, 7:108-109.

[3] Commissioners, Report, pars. 6329-6383 (pp. 417-420).

Archiepiscopal Palace of Lambeth, prepared by Samuel R. Maitland, as a model for the British Museum Library's catalog. Though that catalog (or index) covered only a portion of a relatively small library, Collier maintained that "if, as Mr. Maitland has shown, it is useful in a small library, it is ten times as desirable in a large one." A useful catalog, he declared, could be drawn up with no more than twenty rules, and by shortening the titles the cataloger could make 120 entries a day (the present rate of progress having been estimated at 60 per day). By way of illustration, he had brought samples of his own work in cataloging his personal library: "I made, with the utmost ease, 25 and 30 entries in an hour. . . . I wrote them at perfect leisure, and corrected them afterwards."[1]

On the other hand, several witnesses were prepared to defend the principles on which the new catalog was being compiled. Chief among these was Panizzi himself, who testified at great length. A catalog, he believed, "ought to be full and accurate," and he considered the Trustees themselves to have mandated such a catalog. The delays in publication had been caused not by the rules for compilation, but by the Trustees' interference in the preparation, a lack of staff, and the unwillingness of the Trustees to permit work to be done on the catalog after regular hours. A code of rules, made in advance by the person responsible for the catalog, was absolutely essential for proper work to be done, and the rules in use had not proved to be too extensive; indeed it was found necessary in the process of cataloging to devise several additional rules. As to Mr. Collier's catalog, Panizzi had handed it over to John Winter Jones (then an Assistant in the Printed Books, later Assistant Keeper, Keeper, and Principal Librarian), who reported that "These 25 titles contain almost every possible error which can be committed in cataloguing books . . ."[1] Other witnesses supporting Panizzi's methods included Edward Edwards; John Humffreys Parry, who had worked on the catalog as a temporary assistant from 1839 to 1843; and Augustus de Morgan, a mathematician and bibliographer at the University of London who considered that an abbreviated catalog was not only useless but as time-consuming in preparation as a full one, and further stated that in the compilation of a catalog of mathematical works he would put more faith in the ability of a bibliographer than in that of a mathematician unacquainted with the problems of catalog production.[2]

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[1] Ibid., pars. 5052, 5062, 5085-5089, 5600, 6261 (pp. 318, 319, 322-323, 413); Miller, Prince of Librarians, pp. 173, 180.

The results of the investigation were considerably more favorable to the Museum in general, and to the Library's handling of its catalogs in particular, than many would have expected. Despite the complaints that had been made, the Commissioners believed that

> . . . no national library exists or has existed which has afforded or affords so large a measure of accommodation to readers of all classes as the Library of the British Museum under its existing management. The complaint which has from many quarters reached us, for instance, of the non-existence of a printed Catalogue of the Printed Books, would derive much corroboration if it could be shown that such an instrument existed in the case of any of the more extensive public libraries in Europe.

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[1] Commissioners, Report, pars. 4100, 4108-4111, 9610-9611, 9641-9647, 9671, 9674-9676, 9788 (pp. 234,235-236, 666, 672-673, 690-692).

[2] Ibid., pars. 6481-6516 (pp. 425-431).

The Trustees' interference with Panizzi's activities in such particulars as their insistence on letter-by-letter publication of the catalog had been ill-advised, though it was an error which arose from a commendable regard for the interests of the public; and it was the Commissioners' recommendation that the decision to complete the work in manuscript be abided with.[1]

The problem of incorporating new entries had in the meantime been addressed by Wilson Croker and by E. A. Roy, both of the Library staff, who had independently devised the method of writing each entry on a movable slip, to be lightly pasted into what came to be called a guard-book.[2] In this form, then, the catalog was completed, occupying 150 volumes at first, and placed in the Reading Room in 1851. Over the next thirty years Panizzi became Principal Librarian and then retired, as did John Winter Jones in his turn; Jones, Thomas Watts, William Benchley Rye, and George Bullen were the Keepers of Printed Books during this period. Panizzi, in his time, had resisted every suggestion that the new additions to the catalog be reduced to print, and the Trustees had learned too well the lesson he had taught them. Swelled by the acquisitions that began flowing in under the new Copyright Act, the manuscript catalog grew to monstrous proportions: the original 150 volumes had become 2,000 in 1866, and it was estimated that their numbers would soon reach 3,000, many of them so bulky as hardly to be usable. The Treasury, too, was beginning to complain of the expense of breaking up and rebinding the volumes. Edward Augustus Bond (later Sir Edward), who became Principal Librarian in 1878, was determined to relieve this situation by putting the catalog into print.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 13-23.

[2] Rawlings, pp. 159-160; John Horner, Cataloguing (London: Association of Assistant Librarians, 1970), p. 305.

He had an able ally in Richard Garnett the younger, a prolific writer and scholar of prodigious memory, who had begun copying titles in the Department of Printed Books at sixteen and was now Superintendent of the Reading Room. Garnett had pressed for the printing of the catalog as early as 1875, suggesting that accession slips begin to be printed immediately and that plans be made for the conversion of the entire catalog. The Trustees had delayed a decision. But when Bond became Principal Librarian he encouraged Garnett to continue airing his plans at every opportunity, and at last, in 1879, the Trustees agreed to have accession titles printed.[2]

In this way Bond's program for the catalog was begun. The conversion of the existing entries was somewhat delayed by the attention paid to the preparation under George Bullen of an Early English Catalogue of printed books,[3] but in time this plan too was approved, and in 1881 the printing of the catalog began. The funding was to be on an annual basis rather than the lump sum (estimated by Garnett as £100,000) which would have allowed the entire catalog to be brought out at once. Given this limitation, however, the plan for printing was far more rational than the one Panizzi had had to contend with. The first volumes to be printed were the bulkiest and those, such as "Academies," "Bible," and "Virgil," which would be of special interest to the public and to possible subscribers. This plan had the additional advantage, as Garnett remarks, of "making the printing a portion of the daily life of the institution, a piece of administrative routine like cataloguing or binding," by which "we escape alike ambitious professions and ambitious failures."[1]

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[1] Miller, That Noble Cabinet, p. 272; Barbara Smith McCrimmon, "The Publication of the British Museum's General Catalogue of the Printed Books 1881-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1973), pp. 13-18, 23-45; Garnett, "The Printing of the British Museum Catalogue," in Essays, pp. 70-73.

[2] McCrimmon, pp. 38-46; Garnett, "Printing of the British Museum Catalogue," pp. 71-74; see also his "Public Libraries and Their Catalogues," in Essays, pp. 32-66. This article, first published in the New Quarterly Review of April 1879, was one of the factors influencing the Trustees' decision.

[3] Discussed at length by McCrimmon, pp. 133-157.

This catalog, which under the editorship of Garnett and later of A. W. K. Miller[2] was finished in 1900 (complete to 1881, the accessions from 1882-1889 being finished in 1905), became the basis of the British Museum Library's catalog to the present day. A new edition was proposed in 1930, but this imposed such a burden on the staff that progress was very slow, and in 1954 it was decided to publish a photolithographic edition of the catalog as it would stand at the end of 1955 and to supplement this regularly thereafter. This catalog was published between 1959 and 1966; at 263 volumes, with 3,500,000 main entries, it has been called "one of the greatest bibliographic tools in existence."[3]

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[1] Garnett, "Printing of the British Museum Catalogue," pp. 74-76.

[2] Arthur William Kaye Miller, 1849-1914, who had been employed in Printed Books since 1851; Assistant Keeper, 1896-1912 and Keeper, 1913-1914 (Miller, That Noble Cabinet, p. 273).

[3] Rawlings, p. 164; Miller, That Noble Cabinet, pp. 328-329; Dainton Report, par. 390 (p. 105). The quote is from the Dainton Report.

Dr. G. K. Fortescue, Superintendent of the Reading Room from 1884 to 1912, produced a Subject Index which has been published with five-year supplements from 1886 to the present.[1] Taken together, the catalog and the subject index have served the British Museum Library (and now the British Library) well. The circumstances surrounding the formation of the catalog, too, have brought considerable benefits to bibliographic practice: the preparation of the great manuscript Catalogue of Printed Books gave rise to Panizzi's famous 91 Rules in 1839, and the controversies surrounding its construction shed new light on the complex problems of modern cataloging. But it will have been noted that there was not, in fact, any national dimension in the British Museum Library's catalog up to this time, except in so far as the Museum's copyright depository status made the catalog to some extent a register of British publications. It was essentially the Museum Library's own catalog and no more; and this continued to be the case until well into the twentieth century. Before discussing how Britain at last came to have a national agency in charge of cataloging practices, it will be necessary to review the development of English national bibliography, which for most of its history was independent of the national library.

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[1] Rawlings, p. 164; Miller, That Noble Cabinet, p. 273. Rawlings reports that the first question asked of Fortescue in his new position was, "What is the best guide to Madeira?" He knew the standard work was a Guide by Brown or Browne, but could give no further aid; his knowledge had narrowed the inquirer's search to two volumes of the catalog.

England had seen some activity in retrospective national bibliography as early as the sixteenth century, with the compilation of John Leland's Commentarii de scriptoribus Britannicus in 1546 and of John Bale's Illustrium majoris Britanniae scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium (1548), a work based in part on Leland's writings, which "contained, in chronological order, the names of British authors and their works over a period of fourteen centuries." A later and more sophisticated endeavor was the bookseller Andrew Maunsell's Catalogue of English Bookes, a work intended to be in three volumes, of which the first two were published in 1595 (Maunsell's death the following year brought a premature end to the work). It is notable for its systematic subject divisions and its full and accurate descriptions (no books were included "but such as I haue seene," according to the compiler's preface).[1]

Current national bibliography was slower to develop. There were Registers maintained by the Company of Stationers from 1554 to 1841, but as these were neither printed nor widely distributed, and in any case recorded only works registered or published in London, they could not be called national in scope. This was a lively period in English intellectual life, however, and there was an interest in current bibliography and a model available in the international Messkataloge distributed at the Frankfurt book fairs. The first English current bibliographies of any national scope, in fact, were the London editions of the Messkataloge brought out from 1617 to 1628 by John Bill, a frequent visitor to the Frankfurt fairs. These were originally reprints of the German lists, but soon English titles were added, and English supplements appeared regularly from 1622 to 1626. Following the last issue of these catalogs and the publication of two projected periodic lists which did not survive their first issues, there was a hiatus of some two decades. The next bibliography of general scope was William London's Catalogue of the most vendible Books in "England", published in 1657. It was well received; a reissue was brought out in 1658 and later in the year a ten-page supplement appeared. The second and last supplement, with nearly 400 titles, was published in 1660. London's Catalogue was amply annotated and seems to have been nearly comprehensive, and it has been regarded since its appearance as a bibliographic work of great importance. Four years after the publication of its last supplement, there appeared a catalog by Samuel Speed, intended to be annual. Again only the first issue appeared, probably because of the Plague of 1665 and the Fire of London in 1666. These events, and especially the fire, caused great disruption in the English book trade. Among its other aftereffects, the fire caused a shortage of books, which in turn led to the proliferation of pirated texts, often shoddy and inaccurate.[1]

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[1] LeRoy Harold Linder, The Rise of Current Complete National Bibliography (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1959), pp. 41-42, 47-49.

The bibliographic needs dramatized by the aftermath of the London fire gave rise in 1668 to the first of the Term Catalogues,[2] so called because one was issued during each of the four terms of the legal calendar. These catalogs, "among the major landmarks in English national bibliography" according to Linder, were initiated by John Starkey; Robert Clavell then assisted in and finally took over their publication. Clavell also published a consolidation of the *Term Catalogues* in 1673, under the title *A Catalogue of All the Books Printed in England since the Dreadful Fire of London, in 1666 . . .* A supplement appeared in 1674 and subsequent editions in 1675, 1680, and 1696, the last published jointly with Benjamin Tooke. At first the *Term Catalogues* excluded several categories of publications, and occasional individual works, for what seem to have been mostly religious and political reasons; as the freedom of the press increased, the catalogs widened their coverage. Their value to booksellers of the time was immense, and their popularity inspired but at the same time overwhelmed competitors; of the several rival bibliographies which appeared while the *Term Catalogues* were published, the most durable lasted five years.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 49-53.

[2] Mercurius librarius, or, a Catalogue of Books printed and published in Michaelmas Term, 1668; the title was abridged in 1670 to Catalogue of Books continued, Printed and Published at London. Linder, p. 60.

The second to last number of the *Term Catalogues* was issued in 1709 and the last in 1711, just before Robert Clavell's death. For several decades thereafter, no comparable publication appeared to take their place. A few catalogs appeared, to last no more than a few years each. In the early seventeen-thirties the sixpenny magazine appeared, starting in 1731 with the *Gentleman's Magazine or Monthly Intelligencer* and in 1732 with its principal rival, the *London Magazine; or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*. Both of these, as well as some other magazines, carried short notices of books published during the previous month. The notices varied in completeness and accuracy; in the case of the two leading monthlies, the lists became full enough to have some bibliographical usefulness. In the 1760s, however, the notices of books began to be accompanied by reviews, and as these grew longer there was not enough space left for comprehensive lists.[1]

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[1] Linder, pp. 60-65.

The revival of English national bibliography began in 1773 with the appearance of _The London Catalogue of Books in all Languages, Arts and Sciences, that have been printed in Great Britain, since the year M.DCC. Properly classed under the several Branches of Literature: and Alphabetically disposed under each head. . . ._ Variously titled in later editions as _A General Catalogue . . ._ and _A Modern Catalogue . . ._, this work was originally retrospective, as its title indicates, but its periodic revisions and supplements made it a current bibliography as well. Its chief faults were that dates of publication were generally omitted and that some editions included only works published in London; nevertheless, it was the dominant source for English bibliography for nearly a century.[2]

William Bent, who published the _London Catalogue_ until his death in 1823, also produced another bibliography, _Bent's Literary Advertiser_, established in 1802 and continued by him and by other editors until 1860. This publication appeared monthly, giving

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[1] Ibid., pp. 66-71.

[2] Ibid., pp. 71-72, 78.

"the publisher's name, the publisher's address, title, size, price, binding, author's name and position or profession, and the names of booksellers offering the item"; each annual volume contained an index to the year's new publications. This bibliography was useful but does not seem to have had quite the popularity of the London Catalogues.[1]

In 1836 a meeting of London publishers was held to discuss the creation of a publication addressing their interests. Out of this meeting came Sampson Low's The Publishers' Circular, first published on October 2, 1837. This semimonthly publication was "intended as a concentrated medium for the first announcement and publication of all literary works and new editions," and in order to make it more serviceable to that end, the first few volumes underwent several changes in content and format. In 1853 Low published another catalog, The British Catalogue of Books Published from October 1837 to December 1852; Containing the Date of Publication, Size, Price, Publisher's Name and Edition. A later volume, Index to the British Catalogue, contained entries for 1837 to 1855, and was followed by supplements for 1856 and 1857. Owing partly to the fact that they contained editions and dates, these publications proved immensely popular, and Low was able to effect a merger with the rival London Catalogue. The resulting English Catalogue of Books, first published in 1864 for the period from January 1835 to January 1863, has ever since been one of the two principal annuals among British book-trade bibliographies. Primarily an author-title list, with some catchword subject references, it maintains wider coverage (both in place of publication and in format) than did its predecessors and gives fuller bibliographical information than that found in the London Catalogue--author, title, publisher, date, size, price, and total pagination in most cases. The Publishers' Circular, published weekly since 1891, provides the basic material cumulated annually in the English Catalogue.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 78-80.

A rival to the Publishers' Circular appeared in 1858. This was the Bookseller, published by Joseph Whitaker, who had served as editor of the Gentleman's Magazine from 1856 to 1859. Originally published monthly, it was arranged in subject classes, with entries alphabetical in each class. It was successful enough to absorb Bent's faltering Literary Advertiser in 1860, and became a weekly in 1909, remaining so except for the period from 1916 to 1921. In 1864 Whitaker brought out The Reference Catalogue of Current Literature, an indexed collection of publishers' catalogs patterned on the American Publishers' Trade List Annual. This publication was enormously popular and, of course, increased steadily in size as publishers increased their output. Beginning in 1936, the bound catalogs were replaced with abbreviated bibliographical entries in the index volumes; the frequency also was changed, becoming biennial. Information from both the Bookseller and Current Literature was incorporated into a third publication, Whitaker's Cumulative Booklist, published from 1924. A quarterly publication with annual and, since 1939, larger cumulations, it included both an author-title and a classified list, and from 1933 a section of government publications; information was at first rather meager but became fuller in later issues. The addition of the *Cumulative Booklist* made Whitaker's bibliographic services comparable to those of Publishers' Circular, Ltd.: the *Booklist* corresponding to the *English Catalogue*, and the *Bookseller* and *Current Literature* to *Publishers' Circular*.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 80-81, 109-111; D. Kathryn Weintraub, "A Comparison of the Weekly Lists of the British National Bibliography, Bookseller, and Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1960), pp. 4-5.

Though the Publishers' Circular and Whitaker bibliographies served the book trade well, they were less satisfactory for the purposes of librarians. Perhaps their most important failing from the librarian's viewpoint was that they omitted some items, particularly those outside the regular book trade (such as dissertations, privately published works, and pamphlets). In addition, they were occasionally, though not often, inaccurate. Proposals were made for the creation of a new national bibliography as early as the eighteen-nineties, but none of these were realized.[2]

In 1924, the first steps were taken toward bringing both centralized cataloging and national bibliography into the national-library framework. On October 8, 1924, a committee was appointed "to enquire into the adequacy of the library provision already made under the Public Libraries Acts, and the means of extending and completing such provision throughout England and Wales . . ."[1]

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[1] Linder, pp. 111-114, 160, 197-199; Weintraub, pp. 5-7.

[2] Linder, pp. 162-164; Weintraub, pp. 7-8.

In performing the first part of their task the committee, chaired by Sir Frederic G. Kenyon of the British Museum Library, surveyed 400 public library authorities, deriving from their survey data which were summarized in 113 pages of tables. In general they found that, while all but a small percentage of the population was included in library areas, this did not necessarily mean service was provided to all the population in all areas; in fact, "in 1925, of the population of 12,000,000 in county library areas, over 6,000,000 were still without a library service," and the service where it was given was not necessarily adequate.[2]

The question of adequacy of library service led to a discussion of the problems of scale in library resources. The committee pointed out that, whereas the need for gas or electricity or water is generally proportionate to a town's population, "A community of 5,000 may include readers with as great a variety of tastes as a community of 500,000 and will therefore require to have access to as wide a range of books." Although many small libraries had made "notable efforts" to provide good service to their communities, "it is clear that there comes a point where economic factors become so strong as to defeat the efforts of any community to provide itself with an efficient library." The remedy for this situation, the committee felt, lay in cooperation of smaller with larger units, which should be practiced not only by small libraries but

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[1] Great Britain, Board of Education, Public Libraries Committee, Report on Public Libraries in England and Wales (London: H.M.S.O., 1927), p. 8. Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, the committee's chairman, had joined the BML's staff in 1889 and become Director and Principal Librarian in 1909.

[2] Ibid., pars. 71-72 (p. 31).

> . . . throughout the library service. . . . A fully adequate service is clearly not within the reach of any locality, even the greatest city, entirely out of its own resources. . . . we believe that [the scholar's and the research student's] needs can be met by a scheme of co-operation on a national basis, of which the principal feature is a Central Library . . .[1]

The Central Library referred to was to be a supplementary central lending agency which would supply from its stocks, or acquire, materials that readers could not find in their own libraries, and coordinate existing agencies to guide readers to those best suited to their needs. There was wide support for this idea among librarians, students and teachers, and representatives of library and educational authorities. A somewhat similar body, the Central Library for Students, had existed since 1914 and had already brought about great improvements in local service. The committee recommended that the Central Library for Students be reconstructed as a department of the British Museum, in order to have access to the British Museum Library's reference sources and the expertise of its staff, but with a separate constitution so as not to interfere with the BML's existing functions. It is not necessary here to discuss at length the proposed lending functions of the Central Library, but it should be noted that the committee expected other functions to accrue to it in time:

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[1] Ibid., pars. 72-82 (pp. 31-34).

> It would become a central bureau of library information, and a repository of library experience. To it the Government would naturally refer for advice on questions affecting the library service of the country. To it also public libraries would be able to look for advice on such subjects as the plans of library buildings, or the selection and classification of books.[1]

A second defect in the public library service which the committee believed to arise from lack of cooperation involved the production of catalogs. In 1927 almost all British libraries were cataloging their own books, resulting in extensive duplication of effort and widely varying standards of quality. The solution advocated by the committee was a central cataloging scheme modeled on that of the Library of Congress, whose history and present operation were described in some detail. The principal objections raised in the course of the committee's study to the proposal for central cataloging--that cards for general distribution would not be useful for various libraries, that young librarians would lose valuable cataloging experience, and that high costs and delays woudl prevent use of the service by many libraries--were examined in the light of the Library of Congress' experience. It was found that "The great advantages of a service of catalogue cards from such a source . . . completely outweigh the minor disadvantages of the use of different cataloguing rules; the general standard of catalogues has so far improved as in itself to supply a model for study by young librarians; good catalogues are provided where none formerly existed; and the State service is officially described as practically self-supporting." The committee suggested that in Great Britain the same service could most practically be performed by the British Museum; it was estimated that, since the BML already cataloged incoming publications and printed the copy for its own catalog, the production and distribution of cards with such additional data as Dewey classification numbers could be carried out at moderate extra cost.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pars. 446-460, 474-480 (pp. 156-161, 164-166).

Though the committee's proposals were endorsed by the Royal Commission on Museums and Galleries, the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association, and the Association of Assistant Librarians, their implementation was delayed by several difficulties. First, the British Museum Library's cataloging differed from that of most other British libraries and from the Anglo-American cataloging code, in part because its entries tended to be relatively brief. In addition, the Museum was not able at the time to supply either staff or space for the distribution of cataloging data. These problems were, of course, greatly aggravated by the Depression and the Second World War. Though the National Central Library was established by royal charter in 1931, as an organization independent of the British Museum, it functioned principally as a lending agency. The centralization of bibliographic activities did not begin until 1947, and then not under the aegis of the NCL. In that year the Library Association's Post-War Planning Committee on Library Co-operation recommended reconsideration of central cataloging. The

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[1] Ibid., pars. 484-508 (pp. 167-173).

Association's Council referred the matter to its new Research Committee, which in turn appointed a subcommittee for closer study. The conclusion of this subcommittee was that card distribution "was too complicated and too uncertain of success to serve as their immediate objective"; instead they proposed the establishment of an official current national bibliography.[1]

The development of a plan for this bibliography was entrusted to the Joint Committee on National Bibliography, consisting of representatives from the British Museum, the Library Association, and other organizations involved in research, publishing and information distribution.[2] In 1949 this committee became the Council of the British National Bibliography Limited, with the object

> to carry on the business of compiling, editing and publishing in appropriate bibliographic form lists of books, pamphlets and other recorded material of whatever nature published in Great Britain, the Dominions and Colonies and/or foreign countries, together with such annotations or further information as may be desirable for the use of librarians, bibliographers and others.[3]

The BNB began its work with "a capital of 15s., a guarantee for one year of £2,000 from the Library Association, and a promise of accommodation in the British Museum with access to books received in the Museum's Copyright Receipt Office." This arrangement continued until 1967, when the British Museum's space problems caused the BNB to be moved to separate quarters. Thereafter the agent for copyright deposits of the Oxford, Cambridge, and Trinity College Libraries and the National Library of Scotland was housed on the BNB's premises and made his deposits available for the compilation of the bibliography.[1] The bibliography itself, first published January 7, 1950, was a weekly service with monthly, quarterly, annual, and quinquennial cumulations. Each entry was constructed according to the Anglo-American cataloging rules and included a Dewey classification number (until 1969, no tracings or subject headings were provided). Thus the BNB, from the first, was both a national bibliography and a central cataloging service. It was, in fact, initially printed on leaves so that entries could be cut out and pasted onto cards, and the suggestion was made that in some public libraries the BNB might be used as a substitute for a card catalog. Although neither of these suggestions met with much enthusiasm and the one-sided printing format was abandoned after a year, the BNB itself proved very successful and became financially self-supporting after several years.[2]

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[1] Weintraub, pp. 9-13; "The British National Bibliography," Library Association Record, ser. 4, 51, no. 5 (May 1949):152.

[2] Weintraub, pp. 13-14; Dainton Report, p. 45.

[3] Dainton Report, p. 45.

In response particularly to the situation of smaller libraries, which often did not have access to means of reproducing their own catalog cards, the BNB instituted a printed card distribution service in June of 1956. This service was less widely subscribed to than the members of the Kenyon committee had predicted in 1927; only 160 libraries had subscribed by February of 1957, and use of the cards has never become so widespread as in the United States. Nevertheless the cards have had a significant place in British bibliography; 300 libraries were subscribing by 1969 and about 3,000,000 cards per year were purchased in the nineteen-sixties and early seventies. The BNB card service never became all-inclusive; relying on British copyright deposits for its intake, it excluded most foreign publications and, by one estimate, would have supplied as little as half the cataloging required by a British university library. About three-fifths of the service's subscribers in 1966, in fact, were public libraries, and only a few were university libraries. Other disadvantages included the lack of tracings and subject headings (though after 1969 these could be had at extra cost). However, the service maintained a high standard of promptness and accuracy and in addition was probably the least expensive in the English-speaking world.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[2] Ibid., p. 45; "British National Bibliography," pp. 152-153; A. J. Wells, "The British National Bibliography: Some Thoughts for the Future," Library Association Record, ser. 4, 51, no. 8 (August 1949):242-243; Weintraub, pp. 15-19; Horner, p. 337.

The BNB's services expanded considerably over the years. By 1969 it made its photographic reproduction facilities available to other bibliographic and indexing services, supplied data for the Library of Congress' Shared Cataloging Project, and consulted with LC in the design of a machine-readable format for British cataloging. In addition, the BNB became active in the provision of cataloging information, the development of standards, and the dissemination of bibliographic aids; perhaps the most significant projects of this kind in which the BNB participated were the development of the revised Anglo-American Cataloging Rules and the introduction of the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) to British publishing.[1]

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[1] Weintraub, p. 19; Dainton Report, pp. 46-48; Horner, pp. 336-341.

Through the sixties, then, the development of the national library service in Great Britain was in the direction of a loosely associated collection of independent agencies. By 1969, these consisted of the British Museum Library (the Department of Printed Books having two separately housed divisions, the Newspaper Library and the National Reference Library of Science and Invention); the National Central Library; the British National Bibliography; and the Science Museum Library and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology, both administered by the Department of Education and Science.[2] In 1968 the Secretary of State for Education and Science appointed a committee[3] to carry out an "examination of the various National Libraries, and, in particular, to consider whether these institutions should be brought into a unified framework." The committee, known as the Dainton Committee after its chairman, reported in June of 1969 that

> . . . amongst the national institutions themselves, the variety of their administrative arrangements is not conducive to co-operation. . . . Each institution enjoys either complete or a very considerable degree of independence from the others and from the other types of information service which it complements. Where administrative links do occur, they have, usually, existed for a very considerable time and it is probaby fortuitous if

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[1] Dainton Report, pp. 45-47.

[2] Dainton Report, pars. 143-153 (pp. 38-40), pars. 86-99 (pp. 25-28).

[3] The National Libraries Committee, Dr. F. S. Dainton (Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham), chairman.

> they continue to be appropriate to modern, rapidly changing conditions. There is, for instance, no formal machinery for consultation to prevent any unnecessary duplication of stock between the NRLSI and the NLLST, to link the NCL with the NLLST in subject areas where both have responsibilities, or to ensure that the bibliographic requirements of the BNB, the BML and NCL are co-ordinated to the advantage of all.[1]

The Dainton committee recommended that, in order to coordinate the services of these agencies more efficiently,

> . . . the administration of the British Museum Library (BML) [including the National Reference Library of Science and Invention (NRLSI)], the National Central Library (NCL), the National Lending Library for Science and Technology (NLLST), and the British National Bibliography (BNB) should become the responsibility of a new statutory and independent public body, to be known as the National Libraries Authority (NLA). The property and stock of these institutions should, with certain exceptions, be vested in the Authority, which should also assume full administrative responsibilities for certain functions relating to research, bibliographic activities and translations, now carried out by the Office for Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) and by Aslib.[2]

The committee's findings and recommendations concerning bibliographic activities reflected those regarding the national library service as a whole. It was found that

> The BML and the NCL are each cataloguing independently a great deal of the same material; the BNB's main indexing activities are largely duplicated by the cataloguing departments in the BML; and the BML, NCL and BNB all provide essentially similar bibliographic enquiry services. The existing services also have major defects: the BML and NCL cataloguing efforts are not sufficient to cope with the scale of the respective tasks; the BNB's services are subject to delays; and the three bibliographic enquiry services together fail to meet the demand in the social sciences and the humanities not catered for by the published aids.[3]

It was recommended that a National Bibliographic Service be established, as part of the national library, "which would initially combine and co-ordinate and then develop the bibliographic activities of the BML, the NCL, the NRLSI, the NLLST and the British National Bibliography," as well as those formerly performed by the Department of Education and Science's Office for Scientific and Technical Information. In brief,

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[1] Dainton Report, par. 232 (p. 55).

[2] Ibid., p. xii. [3] Ibid., par. 407 (p. 109).

> The main functions . . . would be the compilation and publication of an index of all British publications, the production of catalogue entries, the answering of bibliographic enquiries, and . . . co-ordinating and bibliographic research functions . . . The service should also continue and develop the BNB's catalogue card service, and further the BNB's contributions to international bibliographic development.[1]

The Dainton Report was followed in January 1971 by a Government White Paper (Cmnd 4572) announcing the "intention to set up the British Library as an independent body under the control of a board of management to be known as the British Library Board," and proposing the establishment of an Organising Committee for this purpose. This Committee, which was appointed in the same year, included representatives of the agencies to be combined, as well as of other interested bodies, and drew on the services of numerous consultants. Its work progressed rapidly, leading in 1972 to the passage of the British Library Act, which set forth in broad terms (for the sake of flexibility) the purposes and structure of the new library.[2]

Subsequently, in April 1973, the British Library Board was set up as a public corporation, accountable to Parliament but largely autonomous. The Board consisted of a part-time chairman; a full-time chief executive; three full-time members in charge of reference, lending, and bibliographical services; and nine part-time members. Following the establishment of the Board, the transfer of staff, functions, and property to the British Library was begun, the whole project being completed in August of 1974.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. xiv, par. 408 (p. 110).

[2] Harry Hookway, "The British Library: Introduction," in British Librarianship Today, pp. 32-39.

The bibliographic functions of the British Library--corresponding to those proposed for the National Bibliographic Service in 1969--are performed by the Bibliographic Services Division. Briefly stated, the Division attempts "to integrate the internal processing operations of the British Library with external services to the library community so that its cataloguing, classification and indexing activities create records which can be used for any desired purpose." At present a major part of the Division's work concerns the development of a comprehensive MARC network for use within the British Library, throughout the library community in Great Britain, and ultimately internationally. Besides the necessary development of bibliographic standards and the transference of cataloging operations to a computer-based system, the Division has developed an extensive data base (called Machine Readable Library Information System or MERLIN) to hold records not only for British and LC MARC items, but for non-MARC acquisitions of the Reference Division, the International Serials Data Centre, the records of local libraries using MERLIN services, and various specialized data bases; it has been designed as well to show ownership of records and to serve as an authority file. The Division also continues and extends the existing services of the former BNB, including the distribution of cataloging information; the development of national and international bibliographic standards; the monitoring of copyright intake and the development of cataloging in publication; the issuance of publications, most importantly the British National Bibliography; and the administration of the national catalog card service.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 38-41.

In its first few years of operation the British Library, and with it the Bibliographic Services Division, has been a success; W. L. Saunders (Director of the University of Sheffield Postgraduate School of Librarianship and Information Science) has gone so far as to say that "the signs are almost wholly good. At leadership level we can see a dynamism which is already making this formidable conglomerate the power in the library world that it should be."[2] Owing in part to the efficiency of the Organising Committee, the reorganization of the bibliographic services was carried out at remarkable speed, enabling the Division to take full advantage of computer technology almost from the beginning of its application to library operations. While there is still a need for improvement in some areas, such as promptness and extent of coverage, it is certainly safe to predict as J. M. Plaister does "that the central bibliographic service provided by the British Library Bibliographic

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[1] Richard E. Coward, "The British Library Bibliographic Services Division," in British Librarianship Today, pp. 110-128, 131-132.

[2] W[ilfred] L[eonard] Saunders, "Introduction," British Librarianship Today, pp. x-xi.

Services Division will continue as the leading source of bibliographic description of books published in the United Kingdom."[1]

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[1] Hookway, pp. 38-39; Jean M. Plaister, "Co-operation and the British Library," in Prospects for British Librarianship, ed. K[enneth] C[ecil] Harrison, A Library Association Centenary Volume (London: Library Association, 1976), p. 211.

CHAPTER VII

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ACTIVITIES: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The first catalogs of the Library of Congress (other than Caddell and Davies' letter and invoice for the books purchased in 1800) were the Catalogue of Books, Maps, and Charts, Belonging to the library of the two Houses of Congress, printed by William Duane in 1802, and the Supplemental catalogue . . . printed by James D. Westcott in 1803. A new catalog was brought out in 1804 and another, with the Library's by-laws and related statutes appended, in 1808. These modest volumes--the first was ten pages in length, the last forty--were little more than inventories of the Library's holdings, classified only by size. In the catalog of 1812 the first attempt at classification was made; the titles were arranged under 18 classes and by size within the classes. This was the last catalog issued before the Library's destruction two years later.[1]

The system of classification, like the collection itself, was begun on new lines when the Library was re-established around Jefferson's books. It has been mentioned that George Watterston succeeded Patrick Magruder as Librarian in March of 1815; one of his first acts, a month after his appointment, was to write to Jefferson for advice on classification, since as he said "I have long thought the arrangement of the old Library was incorrect and injudicious . . ."[1]

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[1] Johnston, pp. 156-157, 48-49.

Jefferson obliged with an account of the arrangement of his own library. This scheme, like many others of its time, was based on Bacon's classification of knowledge, with three branches (History, Philosophy, and Fine Arts, corresponding to the faculties of Memory, Reason, and Imagination) divided into 43 classes plus a 44th "Polygraphical" class. Watterston approved of this arrangement on the whole, and Jefferson's library was accordingly packed and shipped in its original order; a catalog was then printed in 600 copies at a cost of $2.25 each.[2]

Reaction to the new arrangement was mixed. Watterston had modified Jefferson's plan somewhat, mainly in rearranging the classes alphabetically; Jefferson thought this unscientific, though he conceded that "the alphabetical arrangement may be more convenient for readers generally than mine . . ." The Library Committee, on the other hand, considered the classification too esoteric for usefulness in a library consulted by many people and "consisting chiefly of miscellanies." The Committee also objected to the cost, "one-third more than the annual appropriation made heretofore by Congress for the additional increase of the Library, and more than one-twentieth of the actual cost of the whole Library." Other interested observers, however, tended to be more favorably disposed, commenting that while the subject arrangement detracted from the appearance of the shelves, it greatly aided consultation of the books and was particularly useful for large libraries. Later Library Committees came to hold this view as well, and the classification continued to be used until the end of the century.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 141.

[2] Ibid., pp. 141-146, plate II; MacCloskey, pp. 27-28.

Though the classified catalogs of the Library which were produced from 1815 to 1861 were certainly an improvement over the first catalogs, they served less well as time went on and the collection grew larger. New catalogs were brought out every ten years, with supplements issued in the interim. The number of these supplements became quite cumbersome toward the end of each decade. The catalogs themselves had variously a vague author index or none at all, making the search for any particular work difficult or impossible. At the same time, each catalog was more expensive than the last. In 1850 Charles Coffin Jewett, librarian of the Smithsonian Institution, proposed a plan by which the Institution would produce a catalog of the Library of Congress using separately stereotyped titles. The immediate advantage of this scheme, as far as the Library of Congress was concerned, was that the plates for the titles could be preserved and new accessions interfiled, so that instead of supplements new editions of the catalog could be reprinted at frequent intervals. Jewett also envisioned a system of central cataloging. He proposed that the Smithsonian Institution publish rules by which all libraries participating in the centralized plan would catalog their own holdings. The entries would then be sent to the Institution, which would stereotype them and print a general catalog with notations of the libraries holding each title. The Institution would retain the stereotyped titles and would print selective catalogs at cost for participating libraries.[1]

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[1] Johnston, pp. 146-150; Salamanca, pp. 126-127.

On being informed of the Smithsonian's willingness to produce a catalog, the Library Committee approved the project. Congress appropriated $3,000 for the purpose, and in August, 1853, the work began. It soon became evident, however, that the cost of the new catalog was at least initially much higher than that of the old. The first volume to be produced, Ancient History, represented 4,000 volumes of the Library's holdings, each title being transcribed as nearly exactly as possible, with notes where necessary and numerous cross-references. It was an excellent example of cataloging compared to its predecessors, but its production had consumed two-thirds of Congress' appropriation; whereas the old catalogs had cost no more than five cents per cataloged volue to prepare, the new one was costing some thirty-three and one-third cents per volume. In the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1853, Jewett repeated his assurance that despite a higher initial cost the stereotyping method would be economical in the long run, and in 1854 an additional appropriation of $5,000 was voted for the catalog. During the summer, however, Jewett resigned from the Institution, and on November 14 it was announced that the publication of the catalog had been discontinued.[2]

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[1] Johnston, pp. 354-361; Charles Coffin Jewett, On the Construction of Catalogues of Libraries, and of a General Catalogue, and Their Publication by Means of Separate, Stereotyped Titles, With Rules and Examples, 2d ed. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1853), pp. 2-7.

[2] Johnston, pp. 361-364.

The next catalog to be produced, in 1861, returned to the previous plan, with some modifications to the classification scheme. Again, there was no author index. This deficiency was finally corrected in 1864, under A. R. Spofford's administration, with the production of an alphabetical author catalog. In the preface to this catalog Spofford explained the decision to print an author rather than a classed catalog:

> All former general catalogs of this Library have been arranged upon a system of classification prepared by Thomas Jefferson, and based upon Lord Bacon's division. This classification, however well adapted, in some respects, to a small library . . . is wholly unsuited to the necessities of readers consulting a large library. It was never designed by its author as a bibliographical system, but rather as a scientific arrangement of the various branches of human knowledge. . . . In abandoning it for a more simple method, the officers of the Library are assured that they have consulted the convenience as well as the wishes of Congress and of other frequenters of the Library.
>
> In the arrangement of any catalogue of books, the chief desideratum, next to accuracy of description, is facility of reference, and to this end all minor considerations should be sacrificed.

In 1869 this catalog was supplemented by a subject catalog, which incorporated some modifications in the classification: the former system of classification by subject and subclassification by format was replaced by close subject classification throughout, and in the process of this change it was necessary to rearrange some subjects and to modify the notation.[1] The result, according to Spofford, "may be open to grave objections [on theoretical grounds]; on the score of utility and convenience, its superiority scarcely admits of a doubt."[2]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 364-369.

[2] Library of Congress, Report, 1869, p. 2.

The Library's next bibliographical endeavor, begun in 1870, was the recataloging of the Library's collections for a new author catalog. This catalog was expected to be an excellent one. It conformed to far higher bibliographic standards than did that of 1864 and included entries for the Library's large collection of pamphlets, as previous catalogs had done only partially. The first volume, A-Braidwood, was published in 1878; the second was printed and ready for binding in 1881. The project went no further. In 1885 Spofford noted with regret "that the continuation of the printing of the new general catalogue of the Library has been long interrupted because of the engrossing and rapidly increasing business of the copyright department," and in 1886 he acknowledged that the work "has been brought to a standstill." Thereafter until the end of the century the Library used an author catalog on five- by eight-inch cards with entries partly in manuscript and partly clipped from previous printed catalogs. It is reported to have maintained the bibliographic standards of the 1878 catalog and to have been kept reasonably current; but it deviated in some respects from the practice of other American libraries, lacked definite rules for the preparation of entries, gave no subject access, and was available only to the staff.[1]

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[1] Library of Congress, Report, 1870, p. 6; 1881, p. 5; 1885, p. 7; Mearns, The Story Up to Now, p. 130; Dan Lacy, "The Library of Congress: A Sesquicentenary Review," Library Quarterly 20, nos. 3 and 4 (July and October 1950):236-237; J. C. M. Hanson, "The Library of Congress and Its New Catalogue: Some Unwritten History," Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam, pp. 178-179.

The reasons for the relative neglect of the catalogs are not hard to discover. As has been said, this was a period of phenomenal growth for the Library, when volumes brought in by copyright and foreign exchange so glutted the limited space available that tables, hallways, offices, even the floors of reading rooms were cluttered with items that could not be shelved. An anonymous writer describes the situation in 1884:

> And if I wanted to cool the ardor, or dash the spirits of a young and rising author who was just beginning his literary career in the New World, I think I could do it in no way more effectually than to take him by the hand and lead him through the crooked, dark and winding ways of this labyrinth of literature; or better, leave him in the midst, without a clue and without a guide, to be impressed by the unimaginable horrors of the situation, and the hopelessness of ever finding his way out again. I would do by him as the monks of old did by their visitor in the Catacombs, show him, indeed, not skulls and thigh-bones of saints built into the walls of crumbling vaults and mouldering arches, but I would show him every niche and alcove stuffed with the mummy cases of dead and dried authors; cords of them piled on the floors, or stacked up in the galleries, and the rising tiers of them, even to the roof, of the heavily loaded shelves of the Library, solidly packed with "preserved brain," of which the imaginary sconces would resemble most those grinning pyramids of human skulls which Timour the Tartar was wont to erect for trophies on the sites of razed and conquered cities.[1]

Spofford himself warned that he would soon be "presiding over the greatest chaos in America"[2] and frequently noted in his reports that the task of finding a place for current acquisitions was draining resources that would otherwise be brought to the preparation of catalogs.[3]

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[1] A National Library Not a Mausoleum (n.p.: Privately printed, 1884), p. 3. The copy in hand is signed "John Savary, Asst Librarian."

[2] Library of Congress, Report, 1875, p. 10.

[3] Ibid., 1871, p. 6; 1878, pp. 3-4; 1881, p. 5; 1885, p. 7.

With the relocation of the Library in 1897 it became possible to consider the establishment of its bibliographic functions on a new and more effective basis. The plans of the Library's new administration in this regard seem at first to have been fairly conservative; Young's annual report for 1897 does not mention the prospect of reclassification or a national cataloging service. By the following year, however, the Librarian was reporting plans for the constuction of a dictionary card catalog with a new classification and the possibility of card distribution to other libraries.[1] The adoption of these plans was due partly to the active interest of librarians throughout the country (an interest most clearly articulated by the American Library Association) and partly to staff changes in the Library.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century there had been a certain number of American librarians who were interested in national, and even international, bibliographic schemes. The most prominent of these in the early years was Jewett, whose plan for centralized cataloging in the Smithsonian Institution was first published in 1850 Jewett's plan contained the elements of a modern national bibliographic service: the establishment and dissemination of cataloging standards, the shared contribution and distribution of cataloging data, and the location of holdings in a union catalog; and in fact, as was noted in chapter V, had he succeeded in his efforts the Smithsonian would have gone a long way toward developing into our national library.[1] The American Library Association took up the cause simultaneously with its foundation--Melvil Dewey proposed a discussion of centralized cataloging during the fourth session of the founding conference--and continued its advocacy thereafter. At the same time, the practice of cataloging and classification itself was being examined probably more carefully and more systematically than at any previous time. Two of the pioneering workers in this area were Charles Ammi Cutter, who developed over a number of years a systematic view of librarianship that culminated in a classification system, an author table (the now-familiar "Cutter numbers") and a volume of Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalogue; and Dewey, whose classification system was first published in 1876.

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[1] Ibid., 1897, pp. 17-21; 1898, pp. 19-23.

Attempts were made to put centralized bibliographic schemes into practice, but for one reason or another, most failed. For example, Jewett could not persuade Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian, to involve the Institution in bibliographic activities; and the Library Bureau in Boston, which printed and sold catalog cards from 1894 to 1896, could not get many publishers to send books for cataloging.[2]

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[1] Mearns, The Story Up to Now, p. 113; Paul Edlund, "A Monster and a Miracle: The Cataloging Distribution Service of the Library of Congress, 1901-1976," Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress 33, no. 4 (October 1976):387-388.

[2] Edlund, pp. 388-390; Francis L. Miksa, ed., Charles Ammi Cutter: Library Systematizer, The Heritage of Librarianship Series, no. 3 (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1977), pp. 20-21.

The ALA agreed in 1896 to take over the Library Bureau's card service, but it had long been and continued to be the hope of the Association's more prominent spokesmen that the centralization of bibliography would take place in the Library of Congress. Two major obstacles delayed this. One was, of course, the impossible conditions prevailing while the Library was quartered in the Capitol. The other was the background and interests of Spofford himself. Spofford had done an excellent job of reshaping the copyright law, building the collections, and establishing the Library's national importance; but, as the Library Journal remarked in an editorial, he "has been so busy with the mass of detail which he has undertaken to handle that he has not trained himself as an executive for this kind of work [i.e. reorganization of the Library's methods], nor been able to keep in touch with the modern developments of library organization and practice." He was a bookman of great distinction, but not the kind of administrator needed for a national bibliographic service.[1]

Under the administrations of Young and of George Haven Putnam, who became Librarian of Congress after Young's death in 1899, several appointments were made that had great significance in the development of the Library's new bibliographic role. J. C. M. Hanson, who became head of the Catalogue Division in 1897, had worked at the Newberry Library under Poole and had spent four years recataloging and reclassifying the University of Wisconsin Library. Two co-workers at the Newberry, Charles Martel and Steingrimur Stefánsson, later joined him at the Library of Congress. Charles Harris Hastings was hired as an assistant in the Catalogue Division in 1900 and later supervised the Card Division with remarkable dedication. Putnam himself (unlike Young, who had been a journalist) was a librarian of long experience and progressive views, who while still at the Boston Public Library had discussed the coming reorganization before the Joint Committee on the Congressional Library.[1]

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[1] Edlund, p. 388; ["The future of the national library . . ."] (untitled editorial), Library Journal 22, no. 1 (January 1897):4; Cole, p. 38.

Within one or two years after Hanson's arrival, according to Lacy, the basic decisions on the Library's future cataloging activities were made:

> 1. A dictionary card catalog was to be the principal instrument of control over the collections.
> 2. The rules for preparing the cards were to be based on those of Cutter, modified in some particulars by those of Dewey and Linderfelt and by the conclusions of W. C. Lane's survey in 1893 of cataloging practices in American libraries.
> 3. A new classification scheme would be devised, based on Cutter's principles and rejecting the decimal approach except for certain auxiliary purposes.
> 4. A system of subject headings would be devised, based on the American Library Association list of subject headings.
> 5. The cards prepared for the catalog would be printed, and copies of them would be sold to other libraries.[2]

It will be noted that almost all of these decisions were made with a view to their usefulness in interlibrary cooperation. The decision to maintain a dictionary card catalog, for instance, brought the Library of Congress into conformity with the already established practice of an increasing number of American libraries; and the cataloging rules, to which it was hoped that other libraries would eventually subscribe, were brought into closer conformity with preaviling practices even at the expense of compromising the integrity of Cutter's admirable system. The obvious exception to this tendency is the monumental classification system developed principally by Charles Martel from December of 1897 onwards--a system which reflects vast erudition and is well suited to the needs of large research libraries, but which serves smaller unspecialized institutions less well. An attempt was in fact made to adapt the Dewey Decimal system for the Library's use in 1899, but Martel was unable to agree with Dewey on a plan for the adaptation--partly because of an unrealistic deadline of one year--and so got a regretful refusal from Dewey and continued with his own project. Even so, the detailed Library of Congress classification and the elaborate entries prescribed by the cataloging rules reflected an affinity with American library practice generally. The descriptive cataloging and classification together were designed to make particular items almost as readily accessible as they would be in a small public library, whereas the practices followed earlier and still prevailing in European national libraries had been designed for archival more than for retrieval purposes.[1]

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[1] Lacy, p. 237; Edlund, pp. 400-401; "The Congressional Library Committee and the American Library Association," Library Journal 22, no. 1 (January 1897):15; United States, Congress, Joint Committee on the Library, Condition of the Library of Congress (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1897), pp. 221-222.

[2] Lacy, p. 237.

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[1] Charles Harris Hastings, "Reminiscences and Observations on the Card Distribution Work of the Library of Congress," in Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam, p. 195; Lacy, p. 237-239; John P. Comaromi, "Knowledge Organized is Knowledge Kept: The Dewey Decimal Classification, 1873-1976," Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress 33, no. 4 (October 1976):322-323.

The Library's new cataloging programs, for the most part, enjoyed immense success from the start. The recataloging and reclassification of the collections went forward with surprising speed; most of the volumes had been reclassified by 1903, and by 1910 the transition to the new system was essentially complete. By that year, too, the bulk of the classification schedules had been constructed, though a few areas remained undone for some time afterwards (most notably the K schedules for law, which are still being brought to a final form). As has been mentioned, the classification has proved impractical for the use of many libraries with smaller or more specialized collections than those of the Library of Congress. For the institution in which it was developed, however, the system has been quite possibly more useful than any other could have been; and it has been adopted by a growing number of large research libraries and some special libraries.[1]

Of even more importance to American libraries generally were the cataloging rules developed by Hanson and his colleagues. These rules became the basis for the 1907 Anglo-American rules, whose American edition was published by the American Library Association in 1908; by 1939, when Herbert Putnam retired, they were used in almost every sizeable library in the country. By this time, however, they were also the subject of a great deal of criticism. The ambitious cataloging practices of the late nineteenth century--which led Dewey to tell the Joint Library Committee that a book might require as many as 300 cards to be properly indexed--had led the art of cataloging into what Lacy has called "a Byzantine period of purposeless elaboration." The staffs of large research libraries especially had grown discontented with the rules, since their institutions had begun to collect on a larger scale than ever before, and much of the new material was difficult to catalog by traditional methods. Complaints were not stilled on publication in 1941 of the preliminary edition of a revised code, which turned out to be if anything a further elaboration of its predecessor.[1]

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[1] Library of Congress, Report, 1903, p. 87; Lacy, pp. 239-240; Goodrum, pp. 96-97.

Under the administration of Archibald MacLeish, the Library began to re-examine its own cataloging practices. This was a response partly to the complaints of the profession and partly to changing conditions--the same conditions which were making it difficult for other large libraries to keep pace with their acquisitions. The result of this self-evaluation was a reorganization of the processing operations within a new Processing Department, under the leadership of L. Quincy Mumford. At the same time, the cataloging code was once again revised and published jointly by the Library and the ALA under the title Rules for Descriptive Cataloging in the Library of Congress (preliminary edition, 1947; final edition, 1949). This code, however, was essentially a clarification rather than a simplification of the earlier versions. It was not until 1967 that a simpler, more pragmatic code, the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, was produced by the cooperative efforts of the American Library Association, the Library of Congress, the (British) Library Association, and the Canadian Library Association. While the AACR was an improvement from the standpoint of practicality, it did not provide a sufficiently standardized format for machine-readable files. A further revision to correct this deficiency was begun in 1974, two chapters having been published separately so far.[1]

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[1] Lacy, pp. 239, 243-244; Joint Committee, Condition of the Library of Congress, p. 159; Paul Dunkin, Cataloging U.S.A. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), pp. 9-13.

The Library's subject headings, like its cataloging rules, were well received by librarians, and as the headings expanded to cover a widening range of materials, it became necessary to begin constructing them systematically and to publish them as a list independent of the ALA headings from which they took their origin. The publication of the headings began in 1909 and rapidly became a bibliographic venture in its own right, with its own system of construction and its own theoretical and practical problems. The list of subject headings is now in its eighth edition, with a ninth in preparation, and is kept up to date by regular supplements. It is the principal American source for standard subject headings, its only significant rival being the Sears List of Subject Headings which is mainly used in smaller libraries.[2]

Of all the Library's bibliographic activities begun after 1897, one of the most far-reaching in its effects was the national distribution of catalog cards, together with the activities that came to be associated with it. Yet for several years it was not altogether certain to what extent the Library would agree to take on this function. Young mentions in his annual report for 1898 that "Other libraries can be assisted materially if sets of printed catalogue cards can be furnished at moderate price." Putnam, too, had expressed as early as 1896 the hope that the National Library (his phrase) would be able to print and distribute duplicates of its catalog cards at moderate cost. Once in charge of the Library, however, he moved cautiously, not so much in deciding to establish a card service as in determining how it should be administered. During the summer and fall of 1901 he traveled over the East and Midwest gathering information on the needs of the library community for assistance from the Library of Congress. Meeting with ALA members in July, he stated his belief in the Library's function as a national institution and discussed the possibility that it might distribute its cataloging, but did not say definitely that it would do so. By September his decision was made. Speaking at the meeting of the New York Library Association at the Lake Placid Club, he said that while the Library could not guarantee promptness, it was prepared to offer duplicate cards to any library that cared to subscribe to them. During the next two months, he distributed circulars to some four hundred libraries, seventeen state library commissions, and sixteen foreign bibliographic and literary journals asking for responses to a proposal that the Library sell copies of its cards at cost plus ten percent. The response was immediate and enthusiastic, and within two years cards were being produced at the rate of 225 titles a day.[1]

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[1] Lacy, pp. 244-245; AACR, pp. v-vii; Dunkin, pp. 13-19.

[2] Lacy, p. 239; Dunkin, pp. 82-87.

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[1] Edlund, pp. 393-399; Goodrum, p. 39; Joint Committee, Condition of the Library of Congress, p. 226; Library of Congress, Report, 1898, p. 21; Hastings, pp. 195-196. Hastings describes Putnam's circular and

The card distribution program was given an early boost by two events occurring in 1904. The first of these was the Library's exhibit at the ALA's annual conference, held on the grounds of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis; the second was its publication of the new edition of the A.L.A. Catalog, together with a pledge to acquire and catalog all of the 8,000 volumes therein. Once again, there was a massive response. Sales, which had risen about ten percent for each of the previous years, increased by 106 percent in 1905.

A further impetus to growth was the cooperative cataloging program, by which the Library printed and distributed cards for such acquisitions of certain other libraries as were not in its own collection. At first the cooperative cataloging libraries were those of other federal agencies; beginning in 1910 other libraries were invited to contribute cataloging. By 1939 this program was adding to the card stock over 5,000 titles a year, mostly works of scholarly importance.

By the first World War the Card Section was having serious space problems which eventually necessitated two moves into separate annexes; the section's work was soon found to merit a separate administration as well, so that the former Card Section of the Catalogue Division

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accompanying memorandum as reading "like an invitation to a picnic," but the unknown cataloger who prepared the Library's first printed card may have been moved by a sounder intuition. Card number 98-1 describes an American edition of Balzac, listing the individual titles: "The Novice," "A Dark Affair," "The Involuntary Comedians," "A Start in Life," "Lost Illusions," "The Elixir of Long Life," "The Unknown Masterpiece," "The Quest of the Absolute," and "Petty Worries of Conjugal Life" (see Edlund, p. 399).

became the Card Division in 1914. Charles H. Hastings became its chief, remaining in that position until his retirement in 1938. Hastings was undoubtedly one of the most single-mindedly dedicated workers who ever lived--his work week routinely consisted of seven fifteen-hour days--and this was what the Division needed as it grew to serve 6,311 subscribers (the 1938 figure).[1]

Up to this point the efforts of the Library of Congress in disseminating cataloging information were for the most part separated from the production of a national bibliography and union catalog; and, in fact, the early development of American national bibliography took place outside the Library. As in England, the first national bibliographies in the United States were produced by booksellers in order to stimulate the book trade. The first such bibliography of which a record survives seems to have been A Catalogue of Books Published in America, and for Sale at the Bookstore of John West, printed by Samuel Etheridge at Boston in 1797; it was followed by another Boston publication, A Catalogue of All the Books Printed in the United States, with the Prices and Places Where Published Annexed, in 1804. The first serial bibliography was Orville A. Roorbach's Bibliotheca Americana; Catalogue of American Publications, published in New York from 1849 to 1861 with retrospective coverage to 1820; this was followed by James Kelly's American Catalogue, published in two volumes for 1861-65 and 1866-70.

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[1] Lacy, pp. 241-242; Edlund, pp. 400-410. "Hastings was a man from Maine," says Edlund, "which to some would provide the master key to his character." Others will note that he spent two years in graduate study at the University of Chicago.

The original American Catalogue ceased publication in 1871; several years later it was revived by Frederick Leypoldt, and under his leadership and later that of Richard Rogers Bowker, it continued to be published until 1911.[1]

Leypoldt also founded Publishers' Weekly in 1872 and Publishers' Trade List Annual in 1873; both publications were taken over by Bowker in 1879. The latter was the collection of publishers' catalogs after which the British Reference Catalogue of Current Literature was modeled. Since 1948 it has been supplemented by Books in Print, which provides author, title, and series indexes; more recently the publisher has added a Subject Guide to Books in Print, Paperback Books in Print, and Forthcoming Books. In 1898 Halsey W. Wilson, a Minneapolis bookdealer plagued by difficulties in locating books with partial identification, began publishing a monthly Cumulative Book Index. Since 1900 this has been periodically cumulated in the United States Catalog; Books in Print.[2]

Other bibliographies, for more specialized purposes, deserve mention also. These include the antiquarian bibliographies of Isaiah Thomas, published in 1810 and posthumously in a more complete form in 1874, and that of Charles Evans, published between 1903 and

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[1] Joseph W. Rogers, U.S. National Bibliography and the Copyright Law: An Historical Study (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1960), pp. 6-7; Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen and Frank Keller Walter, Bibliography: Practical, Enumerative, Historical (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), pp. 220-221.

[2] Rogers, pp. 7-8; Van Hoesen and Walter, pp. 221-222; Helen F. Conover, comp., Current National Bibliographies (Washington: Library of Congress, Reference Department, General Refernce and Bibliography Division, 1955), pp. 10-11.

1934 and considered the most important early American bibliography; the chronological catalogs of Obadiah Rich, issued from 1832 to 1846; and the 29-volume Bibliotheca Americana, published from 1868 to 1936. Of the bibliographies mentioned, however, only the trade publications attempted current coverage.[1]

The first non-commercial publication fulfilling some of the purposes of a current national bibliography was "A List of All the Books that have been deposited in the Department of State, for securing their copy right [sic] according to Law," appended to the List of Patents Granted by the United States from 1822 to 1825, which Rogers terms "an elementary--one might say primitive--effort to provide information." William Elliot, the Patent Office clerk who appears to have compiled these lists, tried for some years after their cessation to re-institute them but was unable to do so. Twenty-five years later Charles Coffin Jewett tried to establish a national bibliography based on copyright deposits in the Smithsonian Institution; the only published result appeared in the form of two appendices, under the heading "Copy-right Publications," to the report of the Institution for 1850. The entries were far more full than in Elliot's list, as might be expected from a compiler whose bibliographical ambitions had already become detailed and far-reaching.[2]

While Jewett was concerning himself with bibliographical questions of national scope, the Library of Congress was concentrating primarily on its own operations and on its service to Congress. A published record of copyright deposits first appeared there in the 1846 supplement to the catalog of 1839; it consisted of fourteen brief entries. Similar lists, cumulated, appeared in the 1847 and 1848 supplements, but in the 1849 catalog copyright deposits were distinguished only by a double dagger at the end of the entry. The separate publication of copyright entries did not begin again until 1891, when it was authorized by the new Copyright Act. The Catalogue of Title-Entries of Books and Other Articles, now known as the Catalog of Copyright Entries, had as its primary official purpose the provision to postmasters and customs officers of a means to prevent importation of pirated editions of works under United States copyright, but other purposes were taken into consideration, including the creation of a current record of American literary and artistic production. The Catalog started out as a weekly list arranged by format and subject; modifications were soon made to facilitate reference, especially during the years from 1897 to 1930 when Thorvald Solberg was Register of Copyrights. It is now a semiannual publication giving full bibliographic description for each entry, as well as information concerning the copyright claim, and incorporating cross-references and a title index. Its coverage extends somewhat beyond American publications, including as it does foreign material copyrighted in the United States, but uncopyrighted matter is of course omitted.[1]

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[1] Rogers, pp. 8-11. [2] Ibid., pp. 16-24; Johnston, p. 372.

The production of a national union catalog began with the decision in 1901 to make an exchange of catalog cards with certain major libraries part of the distribution service, in order to create in the

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[1] Rogers, pp. 1-2, 24-26, 45-50, 58-59, 67-70, 85-93; Conover, p. 11.

Library of Congress "a statement . . . of every book of interest to investigators to be found in the important great collections outside of Washington."[1] This arrangement began on a modest scale, the first contributors being the Boston Public Library, the Harvard College Library, the John Crerar Library and the New York Public Library; soon afterward copy contributed by other government libraries under the shared cataloging program was added. The union catalog grew steadily but modestly over the next twenty-five years, its growth limited principally by the fact that few libraries printed their cards. In 1927, when the catalog included about 2,000,000 cards, the Library was given a $250,000 grant from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to be used over five years for the development of its "bibliographical apparatus." This gift provided the funding for an undertaking known as Project "B", whose purposes were to augment the card record of materials in American research collections and to compile a card index of special collections in American libraries. Various means were employed to gather the necessary data. Routine contributions were solicited from those libraries that regularly duplicated their cards; other libraries gave large batches of cards discarded during reclassification and similar projects. In five local libraries and a few others, staff members from the National Union Catalog copied entries from shelflists or public catalogs. Some libraries loaned their catalogs of special collections for the transcription of entries, and some entries were clipped from book catalogs and mounted. The result of all this activity was an increase of over

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[1] Library of Congress, Report, 1901, p. 30.

6,300,000 cards, making the Union Catalog more than four times its previous size; it now located 8,344,256 copies of 6,775,936 works, while the Index to Special Collections now described and located 4,884 collections. After the closing of Project "B" the National Union Catalog, formerly an adjunct of the Card Division, was made a formal part of the Library of Congress, to be operated under Congressional appropriations. Though it was no longer possible after 1932 to continue operating on the grand scale of Project "B"--appropriations averaged two-fifths to one-half what they had been under the project--the catalog continued a moderate rate of growth, numbering 11,156,211 cards in 1941.[1]

At the close of the nineteen-thirties, then, the Library of Congress had developed an extensive range of bibliographic services. Its cataloging practices were, essentially, the standard for American libraries, disseminated in the form of the Anglo-American code and the lists of subject headings. Its card distribution service was the largest and most successful system of centralized cataloging ever developed. The Catalog of Copyright Entries provided a current record of American publication, though as noted before not a complete one, since non-copyright matter was excluded; and the National Union Catalog, while still incomplete, had gone far toward providing a record of what could be found in the nation's library collections. In addition, an attempt had been made to provide a record of the

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[1] Lacy, pp. 242-243; George A. Schwegmann, Jr., "The National Union Catalog in the Library of Congress," in Union Catalogs in the United States, ed. Robert B. Downs (Chicago: American Library Association, 1942), pp. 229-232, 235-237, 247.

Library's holdings to readers outside the Washington area by establishing depository files of its catalog cards in major research libraries around the country. At first, when the card distribution service was inaugurated, there were 25 of these depository libraries; by 1938 there were seventy-four, in addition to forty-five federal agency libraries and five foreign institutions that received partial sets.[1]

The Library's card files, however--the depositories and the union catalog--presented serious problems of access. To consult the union catalog, of course, one had to travel to Washington or send an inquiry to the catalog's staff. The depositories were more accessible, but not sufficiently so to be used routinely by the staff and readers of non-depository libraries; as the file grew, too, they became more expensive to maintain for both the Library of Congress, which had to supply the cards, and the libraries housing them. In 1936 B. Harvey Branscomb, director of libraries at Duke University, proposed that the Association of Research Libraries investigate the possibility of a book catalog of the Library of Congress. This proposal was not acted upon until 1942, by which time Archibald MacLeish was Librarian and John W. Cronin chief of the Card Division. By an agreement between the Library and the ARL, signed on July 10 of that year, the printing of the catalog was begun by the J. W. Edwards firm in Ann Arbor, Michigan. After some years the catalog appeared in 167 volumes, under the title _A Catalog of Books Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards_, and was supplemented in 1950 by the publication of _Books:_

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[1] Lacy, p. 242.

Subjects. In 1953 the scope of the Catalog was increased to include copy contributed by other libraries, as well as location symbols for items cataloged by the Library of Congress, and the publication was renamed the National Union Catalog. The use of outside contributions grew into a procedure whereby eighteen major libraries in various parts of the country report nearly all of their acquisitions and 1,100 more United States and Canadian libraries report unusual, foreign-language, and local works. This procedure creates about 250,000 entries per year in addition to the quarter-million titles for which LC produces cards. The result is an extremely versatile bibliographic tool which, in Goodrum's words, "comes very close to organizing the monographic publishing of the world," and from which (to name a few major uses) cataloging data can be copied, card numbers can be found to facilitate ordering from LC, and locations can be determined for interlibrary loan requests. Its usefulness has been such that, in response to widespread urging, the Library has undertaken the production of the National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints, "a union catalog of all known works held in North American libraries from the birth of printing to the start of the National Union Catalog."[1] Coverage of other types of material was achieved with the establishment of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (1959), Monographic Series (1974), and catalogs of music and sound recordings (1953), films (1953), and microform masters (1965). The reception of these catalogs in the United States and abroad was such that annual sales reached four and a half million dollars in 1975.

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[1] Goodrum, p. 217.

The effect on the Card Division, incidentally, was not what might have been expected; although copy could now be taken directly from the book catalogs, the demand for cards was actually increased to some degree by the listing of card numbers.[1]

From the beginning of the century some publishers had cooperated with the Library of Congress in its cataloging ventures, principally by including LC card numbers in such trade bibliographies as Publishers' Weekly. During the fifties and sixties new cooperative procedures were established. The first of these, the printing of card numbers on individual publications, was suggested by Duell, Sloan and Pearce Publishers in 1951; the proposal was encouraged and publicized by the American Book Publishers' Council and Publishers' Weekly, and by 1952 twenty-four publishers had agreed to it. The Council and the American Library Association have continued their efforts to expand the practice, and at present the publications of most major American publishers bear LC card numbers. A more recent development has been the "Cataloging in Publication" (CIP) program, by which a publisher sends the galley proofs of a book to the Library for rush cataloging, and the resulting information is printed on the verso of the title page, where it can be used in making a catalog entry as soon as the book arrives at a library. This program, which complicates the publication schedule somewhat, has not yet become as widespread as the printing of card numbers alone. It has grown into a significant cataloging tool, however, having been adopted by over [illegible] publishers in 1974.[2]

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[1] Lacy, p. 242; Edlund, pp. 411-414; Goodrum, pp. 216-217.

[2] Edlund, p. 414; Goodrum, p. 208.

The newest developments in the Library's bibliographic activities have resulted from the automation of the Card Division, which was carried out in two phases. The first, beginning in 1968, was the automation of the sorting and billing of card order forms and the establishment of a record of orders. The second involved the storage of the Division's catalog entries on computer tapes and discs. To make this storage possible the Library, in close cooperation with major library groups in the United States and Great Britain, developed first a prototype format known as MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) and then a refined format, MARC II, which is still in use. The use of this format was not entirely successful in its first proposed application, the reduction of the Division's card stock; its real value so far has been as a medium for the distribution of cataloging. In 1969 magnetic tapes of LC's current English-language monographic cataloging were made available to any library (coverage was later extended to other Roman-alphabet languages and some non-book materials). Their acceptance in the library world was comparable only to that of the card service when it was initiated. The tapes were updated weekly, making them considerably more current than the book catalogs; and libraries, library systems, publishers, government agencies, and private bibliographic centers soon discovered that the entries could be reproduced in a wide varity of formats at relatively low cost. The proliferation of these activities greatly improved access to LC's cataloging, especially for smaller libraries; and it had its effect on the demand for catalog cards, which for the first time in sixty-seven years began steadily to decline. In 1975, in order to reflect the fact that cards were no longer the dominant format of distribution, the Card Division's name was changed to the Cataloging Distribution Service Division, later simply Cataloging Distribution Service. Of the program's further consequences, some are already taking shape--the Library, for example, plans to replace its card catalog with an on-line computer file by 1980, and it is likely that some other libraries will follow suit if the change is successful--while others cannot be predicted. What is certain is that the changes which have taken place in American bibliographic methods during this century have not diminished the importance of the Library of Congress; if anything they have strengthened its position of leadership.[1]

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[1] Goodrum, pp. 228-230; Edlund, pp. 418-419.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A review of the development of the English and American national libraries to their present status yields at least two noteworthy points.

The first is that the three major functions did not develop at a uniform rate in the two libraries. In the establishment of its depository status and the development of its collections for research the British institution was for most of its history far in advance of its American counterpart. It was a respectable research collection when the Library of Congress was founded and became one of the most distinguished libraries in Europe while LC was still an institution of relatively minor importance; and the acquisition of publications by copyright deposit was assured in Great Britain some twenty years before it was adequately provided for in the United States. On the other hand, in bibliographic matters the Library of Congress was much quicker than the British Museum Library to take on a national role, having begun a centralized card service and a set of bibliographic standards for national use nearly fifty years before the establishment of the BNB.

The reasons for the British Museum Library's earlier strength in the first two areas are not hard to find. First, conditions in the

United States were far different from those in Britain during the early nineteenth century. In 1800 this country had been independent for twenty-four years, by its own declaration, and had had its constitution and government for eleven. It consisted of a loose federation of predominantly rural states. The conditions of life were fairly plain, even in prosperous and well-established regions, and in the new city of Washington they were positively primitive. The politician and author Albert Beveridge, in his biography of Chief Justice John Marshall, cites the accounts of contemporary residents and travelers who complained of the often impassible streets, the half-finished buildings, and the malarial climate, and concludes: "When considering the events that took place in the National Capitol . . . we must think of Washington as a dismal place, where few and unattractive houses were scattered along muddy openings in the forests. . . . Aside from an increase in the number of residences and shops, the 'Federal City' remained in this state for many years." Considering also the fact that the Library of Congress was either damaged or largely destroyed by fire three times before the Civil War, conditions in its early years were hardly favorable for its development. London, by contrast, was a settled and prosperous city at this time, and had been the center of English politics and culture for centuries.[1]

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[1] Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall, 4 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1916-19), 3 (1919):1-4; Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic, 5th ed., 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1:295-314; Mearns, The Story Up to Now, pp. 15, 34, 59-64.

The development of copyright deposit may have been affected by the geography as well as the relative age of the two countries. Notwithstanding its difficulties in persuading publishers to comply with the English copyright laws, the British Museum Library had a relatively small area to monitor--small enough that Panizzi was able to travel over a large part of it in person. It would be hard to imagine the Librarian of Congress resorting to the same method of canvassing the United States, even as it existed in the eighteen-thirties. (This consideration, of course, would apply only in the case of those works published outside New York and the one or two additional publishing centers in the East.) The administration of the copyright laws was further complicated, as noted in chapter III, by the fact that for much of the nineteenth century a considerable area of the United States was recently settled, with little communication with or reliance on the federal government.

The development of both the research capacities and the depository functions was also affected by the fact that, until the second half of the nineteenth century, the two libraries operated under very different expectations as to their functions. The British Museum Library had its start as a publicly owned research library of general scope; by the eighteen-thirties it was being compared, by its own administration, its users, and the British government, to the other national libraries of Europe and was expected to perform comparable functions. The Library of Congress, on the other hand, had to struggle with contradictory views of its purpose throughout its early development. While some called it a potential national library almost from its inception, others regarded it as a reference library for the use of Congress. This situation--since the division of opinion existed within Congress as well as elsewhere--affected the Library materially in regard to such matters as the level of appropriations and the purchase of various collections. Then, too, until Jewett's resignation from the Smithsonian, there was a real possibility that that institution, and not the Library of Congress, would become the national library.

Why, then, did the Library of Congress develop its bibliographic functions and expand them to a national scale so much more rapidly than the British Museum Library?

One answer is that some, at least, of the Library of Congress' bibliographic activities arose in response to a geographically and economically imposed necessity. The researcher in Great Britain, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, was seldom as far as two hundred miles from a substantial library. By contrast, the libraries at the disposal of an American scholar were often small college or public collections of only a few decades' standing; the older and more complete collections of New England and the Eastern seaboard might be several hundred miles away. Under these conditions, with a relatively small supply of literature dispersed over a large area, the need for a bibliographic network to locate needed items and facilitate their lending would have been more readily felt than in the compact British Isles.

It also seems likely that the relatively late establishment of the Library of Congress and most other American libraries, which delayed the development of collections, worked to LC's advantage in the establishment of national bibliographic functions. It was certainly easier to reorganize the 740,000 volumes of the Library of Congress in 1897 than it would have been with the 2,000,000 volumes in the British Museum Library in the same year.[1] Likewise, many American libraries of the period were either newly founded or still relatively small; they might have found cooperation with a central agency both easier and more profitable than the more established libraries of Great Britain, though it should be remembered that support for central cataloging had become strong among British librarians by the time of the Kenyon report in 1927.

Finally, the background of the BML's librarians and of British librarians in general fostered conservatism in bibliographic matters. It was, and to some degree still is, the Library's custom to train its staff rather than to rely on formal professional education. As a result its administrators until recently were almost entirely scholars and members of the traditional professions; few of them had been librarians, by virtue of either education or experience, before joining the BML. The tendency to regard librarians as scholars or clerks who work in libraries, rather than as members of a distinctive occupation requiring specialized knowledge and skills, has been characteristic of British librarianship generally, and partly for this reason other librarians had little influence on the BML's practices. Even the Library Association, founded in 1877, did little at first to encourage expansion of the Library's responsibilities, since its founders were principally librarians of the traditional kind from the BML and the university libraries.

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[1] Joint Committee, Condition of the Library of Congress, p. 36.

A very different situation existed in the Library of Congress from the time of Putnam onward. Putnam himself and the senior members of his staff were experienced librarians who concerned themselves with the problems peculiar to library work both within and outside the Library of Congress; since that time LC has continued to recruit most of its staff, though usually not the Librarian of Congress, from the ranks of professional librarians. Even before Putnam's administration American librarians had a strong sense of their identity as (loosely speaking) a profession. The American Library Association in particular encouraged the recognition of librarianship as a discipline and the development of professional education. As noted in chapter VII, both the Association and individual librarians urged LC to assume leadership in bibliographic activities, and when the Library began to do so, it was considerably helped by the work that had been done in other American institutions.

The second point of interest is that these two libraries, whose origins could hardly have been more different, came eventually to perform very similar functions. In some respects, this process involved major adjustments for both libraries, especially for the Library of Congress, which had to greatly expand the range of its collections and services; the British Museum Library, on the other hand, in its reorganization as the British Library, had to take on a set of bibliographic activities very different from its traditional archival and reference functions. Furthermore, while those involved in the development of the Library of Congress often referred to the British Museum Library in their discussions and vice versa, the convergence of their functions does not appear to have arisen from the influence of either library over the other; instead, successive changes in each arose as a response to conditions in its own country.

A few suppositions having significance not only for the British Library and the Library of Congress, but possibly for other national libraries as well, can be drawn from the above observations. First, the functions of a modern national library are evidently determined not by convention but by the needs of the society it serves, which at the present time and among industrialized societies seem to be similar from one country to another. Second, at that stage of a nation's development where a national library begins to be needed, the library will evolve out of whatever library resources then exist. The necessary stage of development, presumably, is that at which a country has some measure of internal stability and surplus wealth, a significant class of educated library users, and a fairly steady output of both writing and publication; the resources used may be an existing library or an institution founded by the government for that purpose, or in the case of institutions presently being founded, they may be supplied at least in part by an agency such as IFLA or UNESCO. Third, the nature of the original resources, together with external circumstances, determines the character of the evolving national library to a degree which diminishes over time.

As the institution develops, the course of its development depends less upon its original status and more upon the national functions which it is to perform.

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